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Meeting the Russians

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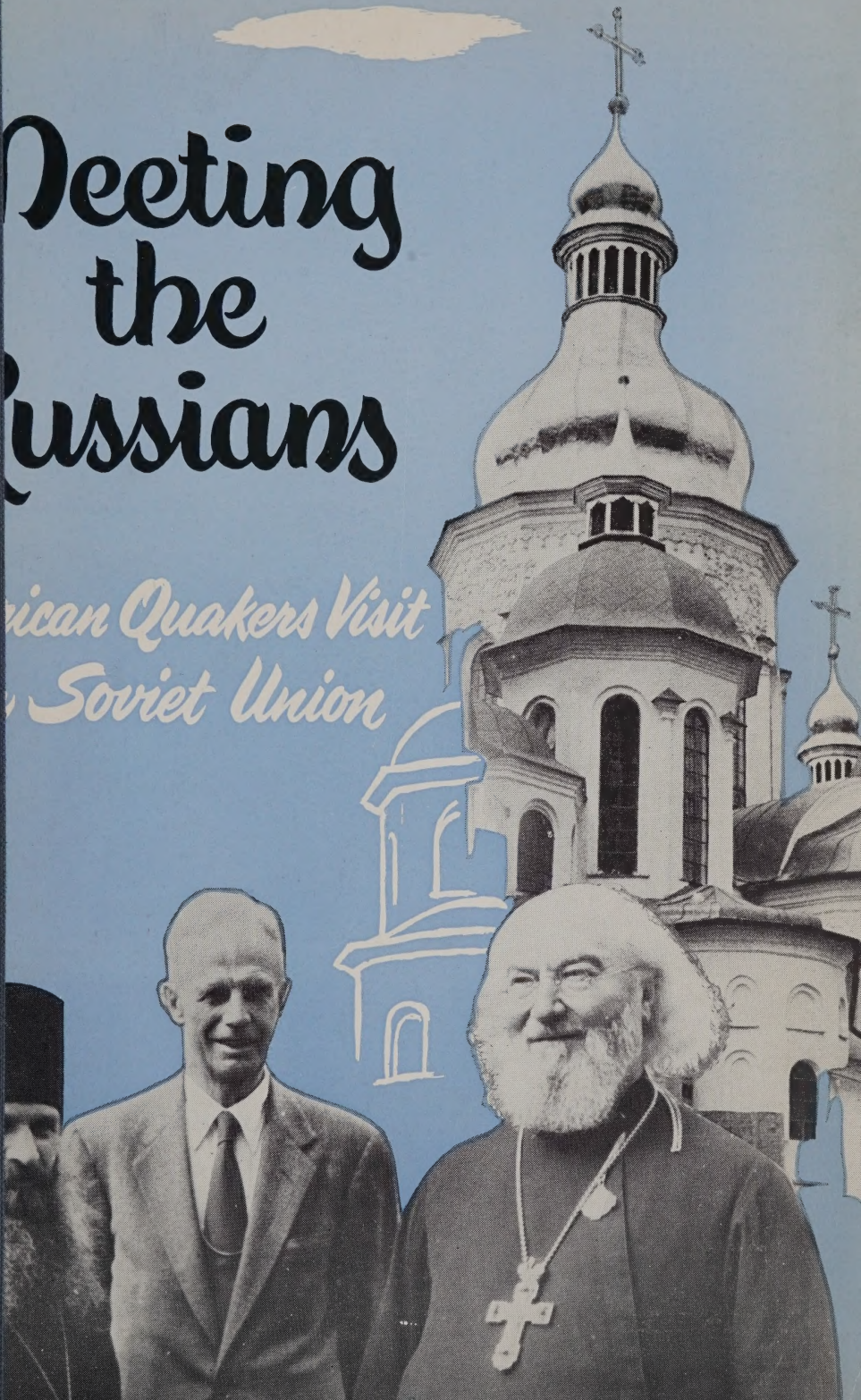
...ican Quakers Visit ... Soviet Union



Wroe Alderson photographs Kiev apartment building, part of widespread construction. Camera delivers immediate prints, and was a real icebreaker.

Stephen Cary looks over a Russian farm with thatch huts. Farm labor is often used wastefully for lack of machinery. Two-thirds of the Russian people are rural.

Hugh W. Moore and Pastor Orlov of 3000-member Leningrad Baptist church chat by Astoria Hotel. A main purpose of visit was religious fellowship.

Cover: Clarence E. Pickett meets Orthodox churchmen at Zagorsk Seminary. Inset, St. Sophia Cathedral, Kiev.

Six American Quakers traveled 12,000 miles in the Soviet Union in June, 1955. Since their return they have traveled even greater distances to speak in hundreds of meetings and by radio and television about what they learned. This written report, in answer to a demand for a fuller account, reveals that recent developments in the Soviet Union tend to bear out their personal observations.

JUN 1 3 1956

MEETING THE RUSSIANS

American Quakers Visit the Soviet Union

A Report Prepared by the Delegation

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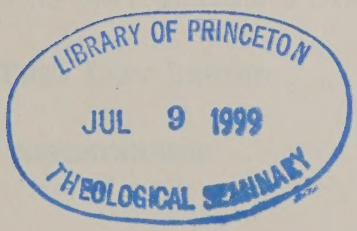

American Friends Service Committee
PHILADELPHIA
1956

Introduction

The Soviet Scene in Focus

It is easy for the foreign visitor in the Soviet Union to feel a little as if he were looking at a three-dimensional motion picture without the necessary colored spectacles that are normally furnished by the management. Through one eye he sees a political and social system vastly different from his own at home or from any of the systems he may know anywhere in the non-Communist world. Through his other eye he sees ordinary human beings, very much like himself, who appear to be leading fairly normal lives within this strange system, and who know so little about the rest of the world that it is difficult to discuss it in terms that are intelligible to them. The bewildered foreign visitor, after trying in vain to bring these two pictures into focus, is apt to give up and simply ignore one image or the other.

The resultant picture of what he sees will be clear but it will lack the full dimensions of reality. The consequence is that the impressions of visitors returning from the Soviet Union tend to be even more contradictory than those of the usual foreign traveler appraising a culture not his own.

Two Clues to Clarity

Unfortunately, the blurred images of what the foreign visitor sees in the Soviet Union cannot be brought into focus by any such simple expedient as looking at them through red-and-green spectacles. Facing the complex puzzle of a society vastly different from his own, the traveler finds himself casting about for some clue to the puzzle, some simple formula that will enable him to understand and interpret what is strange about it in terms that are familiar to him through his experience in his own society. This effort to find simple interpretations can be misleading, and we are aware of its dangers; but we should like, nevertheless, to preface this account of our visit to the Soviet Union by sharing two generalizations that have made our experiences more intelligible to us. One views Soviet morality in terms of military necessity. The other sees Soviet dogmatism as an expression of a belief in "one true faith."

The first generalization grows out of what might be called the fundamental doctrine underlying the whole Marxist-Leninist faith, the doctrine of the class struggle, or class war. Marxism taught the Russians revolting against tsarist autocracy that the basic factor in history was the inevitable antagonism between economic classes, between the exploiters of human labor and the exploited, and that the next stage in the history of all capitalist countries was bound to be the overthrow of the capitalist class by the exploited proletariat, the industrial workers. Society could make true progress only along the road that would lead to this revolution and beyond it to a classless utopia, in which no man would exploit his fellows. Any effort to improve society short of this necessary and inevitable revolution would not only be futile and illusory, it might actually delay the real improvement that only the revolution could bring.

The Ethics of Military Necessity

This belief in class war and revolution as the supreme facts of history led the Communists to apply to relations between classes an ethical standard that can best be understood by comparing it to the ethical standard that has generally been accepted by almost everybody—even most Christians—in time of international war. When two nations are engaged in war, the logic of the struggle usually leads each side to believe that victory must take precedence over everything else. It would be hard to find an example in all history of a nation that faced a conflict between its moral principles and military victory and deliberately chose to remain true to its moral principles at the price of military defeat.

Virtually everything in Communist conduct that shocks the moral principles of non-Communists can thus be explained in terms that are familiar and even acceptable to most non-Communists when demanded by military necessity in time of international war. The list would include systematic spying, censorship, assassinations, mass killings, the taking and killing of hostages, imprisonment without trial, the spreading of false propaganda, the deception of the enemy (whether a class or a nation) by any effective means, mass starvation, sabotage, bribery and the use of provocateurs and informers. We need to look back no further than World War II and the Korean War to find examples of all these acts committed at one time or another by both sides—not because either side wilfully preferred to engage in such acts but because both sides were forced by the logic of war to choose between engaging in these acts and

risking defeat. And we can find them all in the history of the Soviet Union. The grim logic of war, either war against another nation or war against another class, forces all those who are involved in it — whether Russians or Americans, Chinese or Englishmen, Germans or French — to share in whatever crimes against humanity the war may require as the price of possible victory.

But the logic of class war has influenced far more than Communist morality. Its influence can be seen in the structure of the Communist Party, which in Lenin's hands became a highly disciplined army of professional revolutionaries; in the essentially military approach of both Lenin and Stalin to the political problems they discussed in their speeches and writings;* and above all in the centralized, hierarchical, authoritarian structure of Soviet society. Thus, in our efforts to observe and understand Soviet society and the problems of the Soviet citizen in living within it, we found the concept of war psychology to be a helpful one. The standards of morality and conduct which the West has been willing to adopt in pursuit of military victory in war have in real measure been adopted as standards for Soviet society as a whole, because it considers itself to be engaged in a perpetual war.

The One True Faith

The second generalization that has helped us in our effort to understand the Soviet Union is the now familiar analogy between the Soviet system and a militant state religion. We realize that some persons are inclined to reject this analogy because they feel that the word *religion* necessarily implies some degree of approval. We do not agree. There can be good religions and bad religions, and a mixture of good and evil within a single religion. We apply this analogy to the Soviet system because

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* This is strikingly exemplified in the following passage from the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, now officially attributed to Stalin: "There are times when a party or an army has to retreat because it has suffered defeat. In such cases, the army or party retreats to preserve itself and its ranks for new battles. . . . But there are other times, when in its advance a victorious party or army runs too far ahead, without providing itself with an adequate base in the rear. This creates a serious danger. So as not to lose connection with its base, an experienced party or army generally finds it necessary in such cases to fall back a little, to draw closer to and establish better contact with its base in order to provide itself with all its needs, and then resume the offensive more confidently and with guarantee of success. It was this kind of temporary retreat that Lenin effected by the New Economic Policy." *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), pp. 257-58.

we have found that it helps us to understand the system, not because we wish to imply any approval of the system. To be sure, this Soviet religion vehemently rejects and combats the idea of God, but the very passion with which the followers of Marxism-Leninism preach their atheism is in itself a mark of their essentially "religious," rather than scientific, approach to their doctrines.

The Soviet Communists believe their Marxist-Leninist doctrines provide them with the one infallible key to the discovery of all truth. Lenin himself said that "Marx's theory is the objective truth. . . . Following the path of this theory, we will approach the objective truth more and more closely, . . . while if we follow any other path we cannot arrive at anything except confusion and falsehood." *

This attitude toward their "one truth faith" has led the Soviet Communists to endow the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin with a sacrosanct character, similar to that of the writings of the Church fathers in the Christian Middle Ages and to that of the Bible in much of Protestantism. There is a strong tendency among Soviet writers to argue deductively, in the faith that a quotation from Lenin can carry the weight of objective evidence. This tendency to argue from scriptural texts —even though they be Marxist "scriptures"—is another familiar trait to Christians who can remember how Biblical texts were quoted both for and against human slavery at the time of the American Civil War, for and against evolution in the 1920's. The devil can quote scripture for his own purposes, and so can Christians and Communists.

Role of the Party

The Russian Communists' belief in their Marxism-Leninism as the one true faith has led logically to the assumption by the Communist Party of the role of guardians and authoritative interpreters of the faith. Since the leaders of the Communist Party are by definition those who have penetrated most deeply into the mysteries of Marxism-Leninism, they are therefore considered to be best qualified to interpret Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The idea of allowing individual Party members any significant freedom to interpret the faith for themselves would be as unthinkable to the Russian Communists as similar freedom would have been for the Christian Church in the Middle Ages. Differences of doctrine in the Communist world, as in

* V. I. Lenin, "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" (1908) in *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), XI, 205.

medieval Christendom, can mean only the existence of heresy, and Communist heretics have customarily been subjected to persecution that can be compared in ferocity only to that which Christian heretics once suffered at the hands of their fellow Christians.

Parenthetically, we should point out that the resumption of friendly relations between Russian and Yugoslav Communists in the summer of 1955 marked a significant break in the traditional treatment of Communist heretics. Tito has been called by foreign observers the first Protestant of the Communist faith, but as the founder of the first national Communist movement he might be more appropriately compared, not to a Luther or a Calvin, but rather to King Henry VIII of England, the founder of the first national Catholic church. Incidentally, it was interesting to note as late as August, 1955, several weeks after the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia reestablished relations, that the Soviet libraries we visited still had Yugoslav books classified in their public catalogs under "Literature of the Capitalist Countries."

As long as the Russian Communists continue to make a religion out of their Marxist doctrines, it would be as unrealistic to expect them to allow genuinely free elections as it would have been to expect free elections in the Sixteenth Century in the Spain of the Inquisition, or in the religious dictatorship of John Calvin in Geneva. Within the confines of any society based on the "one true faith"—whether it be a theocracy or an "atheocracy"—elections can have little purpose except to determine how large a part of the population has accepted the faith and to encourage the remainder to turn from the error of their ways.

Effect on Education

This comparison of Marxism-Leninism to a religion helps to explain the frank bias that runs through virtually all Soviet intellectual life. Just as the early Christian Church was responsible for the spread of education throughout Europe as a means of propagating the Christian faith, so the Soviet state devotes great attention and energy to its educational system as a means of bringing up the younger generation in the Communist faith. Required courses in Marxism-Leninism and dialectical materialism play virtually the same role in Soviet schools as courses in Christian doctrine and history in the church-sponsored schools of other countries. The children of Christian families today in the Soviet Union are required to study Marxism in public school despite their religious beliefs—just as pagans were required by

Emperor Justinian, in the Sixth Century, to hear instruction in the Christian churches; just as the children of Protestant families today in Franco's Spain are required in public school to study the Roman Catholic catechism; and just as the Catholic children in all the American colonies except Pennsylvania and Maryland were long denied schools of their own faith and obliged to hear Protestant instruction as the price of attending any school at all.

Partiinost', or ideological partisanship, is proclaimed as a virtue in the Soviet Union and demanded of teachers and scholars. From the Communists' dogmatic belief that they have the only key to truth it follows logically that they should not allow what in their eyes is error to have the same opportunities as what they consider to be truth. The whole of the Soviet press is naturally as partisan as the Communist leaders can make it. But this does not mean that every editor of every publication must receive orders every morning from Moscow about what to print. The uniformity of the Communist press can be better explained by the simple fact that all the editors of all publications are committed to the same "true faith."

Nature of Freedom

The problem of analyzing freedom in the Soviet Union also becomes clearer if we resort to the analogy with religion. It is a commonplace of Christian theological writing that man finds true freedom only in submission to the will of God. In the same way Soviet man is told that he can find true freedom only by understanding the laws of nature as revealed through Marxism-Leninism and by shaping his life according to them. Since the Communist Party by definition is the supreme authority on the Marxist faith, the individual is expected to look to the Party for guidance in all areas of life. "Malicious enemies abroad say of us Soviet writers that we write according to the dictates of the Party," the eminent Soviet novelist Mikhail Sholokhov declared at the second Congress of Soviet Writers in 1954. "Matters are somewhat different. Each one of us writes according to the dictates of his own heart, and our hearts belong to the Party and our people whom we serve with our art." Freedom is to be found by handing over one's heart—and one's conscience —to the Party, which by definition represents the real interests of the people.

It is undoubtedly true that many Soviet citizens who accept the official Marxist faith without reservation do feel free within its narrow confines. The fact that we became rather well

acquainted with some of them in the course of our visit did not surprise us, for the same statement might be made about the wholehearted conformist in any society, whatever its restrictions. The degree of freedom that exists in any society, however, cannot be measured by that society's conformists, but rather by the treatment of its rebels. Up to the present there has been little room for rebels in the Soviet Union.

In several respects the Soviet system constitutes a return to certain ideals of the European Middle Ages: a strongly paternalistic closed society, united by a single doctrine that was accepted as the one true faith, and ruled by a priestly hierarchy who proclaimed themselves to be the guardians and interpreters of that faith. In both societies heresy is regarded as the greatest of all crimes, for it is believed to strike at the ideological foundations upon which each society rests. The effort to maintain doctrinal purity has led in both societies to the erection of a barrier of censorship against the infiltration of heretical ideas from abroad and their rise and spread from within. In tsarist times the Russian Orthodox Church maintained its own ecclesiastical censorship, through which all books dealing with philosophy and religion had to pass. The Roman Catholic Church still maintains its index of books believed to be harmful to the general reader. And the libraries of the Soviet Union maintain two separate catalogs, a public one that lists only those books which are officially approved, and a private one that is complete —and accessible only by special permission.

Soviet Priesthood-Army

The two analogies presented here—the religious and the military—represent two almost inextricably intertwined threads that run through Soviet thinking. The Communist "church" offers ultimate salvation in the form of a classless society, where the resources of nature will be exploited only for the benefit of all mankind, as a reward for acceptance now of a dogmatic, authoritarian faith and obedience to the Communist priesthood who are the self-proclaimed guardians and interpreters of that faith. At the same time, this Communist priesthood is also a Communist army, organized—like all armies—as an instrument for the seizure and maintenance of power. The fact that the peoples of the Soviet Union have no means of exercising control over this Communist priesthood-army has led to the virtual militarization of the whole of Soviet society. By militarization we are not thinking simply of uniforms and weapons; we are think-

ing rather of a system of control based on physical force, hierarchical authority and the cult of unquestioning obedience.

According to Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the thought and actions of the individual human being are inevitably determined by the class to which he belongs, regardless of his own subjective beliefs about himself. His only way of freeing himself from blind submission to this determinism is to recognize the laws of history as revealed by Marxism and ally himself with the proletarian class under the leadership of its vanguard, the Communist Party. This doctrine about the class origin of individual thought and behavior has led the Communists to fill the world with people who are by definition their enemies—their class enemies. What is more, this doctrine has continued to produce enemies-by-definition within the Soviet Union itself. Since, in Lenin's words, "Marx's theory is objective truth," and since Marxism teaches that the individual's ideas are an outgrowth of his class background, any individual who disagrees with Marxist doctrine is by definition wrong and a potential or actual class enemy.

Obstacles and Hopes

This aspect of Marxist-Leninist doctrine naturally presents a very serious obstacle to persons of good-will who disagree fundamentally with Marxism but at the same time are concerned about creating genuine peace and mutual understanding between the Communist and non-Communist worlds. In Communist eyes the very fact of rejecting Marxist-Leninist doctrine places a person in fundamental error and makes him a potential, if not actual, enemy of the truth and its guardians, the Communists.

At the same time there are several reasons why men of good-will should not despair of eventually breaking through this wall of misunderstanding and suspicion that Marxist-Leninist doctrine creates around its adherents. First of all, Communists could not avoid being human beings even if they wished to, and as human beings they are far too complex to be adequately explained by their own doctrines. Second, the very emphasis they put on the cult of science and on the dialectical nature of all phenomena may make it easier for them eventually to recognize the contradictions between their Marxist interpretations of reality and reality itself. Third, now that Marxism-Leninism has become the official religion of the Soviet state and now that one of the requirements for getting ahead in Soviet life is proper observance of its rites, it already shows evidence of producing the same antithetical force that has so often corrupted state religions in the past—the force of indifference, which leads to

more and more perfunctory observance, according to the letter rather than the spirit. To speak in the Communists' own terms, it will be interesting to see whether the dialectical process does not eventually confront the Marxist-Leninist state religion with its own counterpart of the anti-clericalism that other established religions have produced.*

In any event, these are the "red-and-green glasses" through which we sought to observe and bring into focus the seeming paradoxes of three-dimensional Russia.

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* This was written before the Soviet deglorification of Stalin, which may help highlight some of these internal contradictions.

Arctic Ocean
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
U. S. S. R.
Gulf of Bothnia
ESTHONIA
LATVIA
Leningrad
Moscow
Volga R.
Akmolinsk
GERMANY
Minsk
Penza
POLAND
Alma Ata
Kiev
Dniepr R.
Don R.
Stalingrad
CZECHOSL.
Dniester R.
ROMANIA
Rostov
Volga R.
Aral Sea
Tashkent
SINKIANG
BULGARIA
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
GREECE
INDIA
AFGHANISTAN
TURKEY
Legend
the entire group
PICKETT, ALDERSON, EDGERTON, ZELLIOT
CARY, MOORE
0 100 200 300 400 500
SCALE OF MILES
IRAN
Mediterranean Sea

I

A New Chapter in an Old Story

On the afternoon of June 2, 1955, six American Quakers drove out through the Finnish countryside to the Helsinki airport and took off on the two-hour flight to Leningrad that was to mark the beginning of a month of travel in the Soviet Union.

The group was bound on a mission of good-will, a religious venture in which faith must lead where knowledge fails. We intended to seek out worshippers of God, to bring them greetings and encouragement and to share with them the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. We hoped that our journey might serve as a symbol to the Russians of the good-will and the desire for peace that we believe to be deeply rooted in the hearts of Americans. While meagerly equipped for the journey in most respects, we held firmly to the peace testimony of Friends, to the principle that the making of peace must first take place in the hearts of men and to a belief in the power of Christian love.

We were not unaware of the nature of Communist beliefs and practices, and we were conscious of our obligation to make the journey not only with open minds and open hearts but also with open eyes. In our contacts with Soviet citizens during our visit and in our reports to our fellow citizens after our return home, we were determined to try to maintain a single standard of honesty and good-will, keeping both groups in mind whenever we so spoke to either.

The Six Members

Every member of the party brought with him a load of preconceptions about the Soviet Union that was more signicant than any of the baggage presented to the customs officials for examination at the Leningrad airport. Not all of us had the same preconceptions, since each had drawn his information from his own sources and had his own habits of thought in arriving at conclusions.

Clarence Pickett, secretary emeritus of the American Friends Service Committee, had a broad background of international experience and contacts, particularly through his years of work as a Quaker observer at the United Nations. He was the only member of our party who had previously visited Russia.

He had been there in 1930, while a Quaker center still existed in Moscow.

The group also included two other staff members of the American Friends Service Committee. Hugh Moore, finance secretary, and Stephen G. Cary, head of the American Section, had both had long experience in Friends' work at home and in Europe, including extensive visits to Finland and Poland, both countries which had been vitally affected by their huge neighbor to the east.

The professional training and experience of Wroe Alderson, a marketing economist, was to be of great value to the rest of the group in interpreting the economic implications of what we saw during our visit.

Eleanor Zelliot, assistant to the editor of *The American Friend,* one of the two leading American Quaker journals, had traveled extensively in India.

William B. Edgerton, a specialist in Russian literature at the Pennsylvania State University, was a graduate of the Russian Institute at Columbia University and combined experience as a Quaker representative in post-war Poland and Yugoslavia with a knowledge of three Slavic languages, including Russian.

Past Russian Contacts

This visit to Russia was not a new experience in Quaker history. Friends' concern for peace is as old as the Society itself, and has often led other Friends in other centuries to undertake visits to the great nation that is part of both Europe and Asia. Friends have waited upon the tsars; tsars in turn have attended Friends Meetings in England. Daniel Wheeler drained swamps in the area around St. Petersburg early in the Nineteenth Century. Stephen Grellet and William Allen visited Russian prisons during the same period. Sixty years ago British and American Friends lent help to persecuted Russian Doukhobors and enabled them to emigrate to Canada. Twice in this century, once before the Revolution and once after it, Friends have brought relief in the face of famine. A Friends Center was maintained in Moscow until 1931, and in 1948 the American Friends Service Committee used $25,000 contributed by individual Americans as a token of friendship to send streptomycin to the Russian Red Cross for treating tuberculosis in children's hospitals.*

A visit by seven English Friends to Moscow and Kiev in 1951, the invitation to representatives of Soviet youth to visit

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* For a fuller account of Friends' contacts in Russia, see Anna Brinton, *Toward Undiscovered Ends* (Pendle Hill, 1951).

England under the sponsorship of British Young Friends in 1954, and the thoughtful efforts of Swedish Friends in 1953 and 1954 in bringing Russian Baptist leaders to Sweden for religious fellowship with other Christians, have kept alive Friends' contacts with the Russian people during the cold war and helped us express our religious concern to break through man-made barriers and witness again to the need for understanding and peace.

Not Special Guests

A question constantly asked of us since we returned home is: "Were you restricted in your travel?" The answer is not easy. We went to the Soviet Union as ordinary tourists and not as the special guests of any Soviet organization. This fact deserves some emphasis, for one's experiences as a visitor in a Communist country are greatly influenced by one's status. Since Communist states are by nature strongly hierarchical, what the foreign visitor can see and do will depend to a great extent upon the influence of the group that sponsors his visit. If he comes as the guest of an important organization, he is likely to find that doors will open even as he reaches out to knock—giving him a little of the same startling experience one gets from those electronically operated doors in some of our American supermarkets and railway stations.

On an earlier visit to another Communist country as a member of a delegation invited by that country's national peace council, one member of our group had many experiences of this kind, such as visiting the country's largest steel center on two hours' notice, visiting the country's most famous political prisoner in his prison cell, spending a day and a night in a frontier military zone normally closed to all foreigners, and finally having a long interview with the head of the government. Such are the prerogatives of the special guest in a Communist country, and along with inflating his sense of his own importance, they are likely to distort his view of reality.

In our visit to the Soviet Union we ran no such risks. As ordinary tourists paying our own way throughout the trip we organized our visit through Intourist, the commercial Soviet agency for handling tourists. One advantage of the tourist status is the opportunity to map one's own itinerary and thereby to test in some measure the extent to which freedom of movement is possible. Overall control of travel is retained by the government which, through Intourist, must give approval to travel plans before tickets are issued. In our case, we were not able to fulfill our interest in visiting the Baltic regions and forced

labor camps. Other major requests were granted, although some features of our itinerary as originally planned had to be altered. We were unable, for example, to take a boat trip on the Volga between Gorki and Kuibishev and to visit Buzuluk, where Friends had maintained a headquarters during the 1923 famine relief work, but in both these instances we were convinced the difficulty involved lack of facilities and the relatively uninfluential status of Intourist itself rather than any basic objection to our plans.

Relations With Intourist

Our relations with individual representatives of Intourist were invariably cordial, but we were not particularly impressed with the efficiency of its service. In the first place, the agency is organized primarily to provide the standard type of foreign tourist with a standard program of sightseeing. It can always procure theater tickets on short notice, provide cars and guides for visits to museums and exhibitions and conduct tours to points of interest, but visits to farms and factories and schools and courts and churches, which were more nearly in the center of our interest, are more difficult to arrange.

We found it necessary to be specific and insistent regarding our interest in these areas, and even then noted a wide variation in the results depending on the ability of the individual Intourist representative with whom we were dealing. Some Intourist staff were able to arrange visits to farms and factories, others were not, and in the Soviet Union these are not made without the appropriate permission from local authorities, so that the role of Intourist at these points is crucial. Indeed, these local permissions are so important as to constitute a second major area of control, for they provide the authorities not only with an absolute check on all visits but also with the opportunity to select the particular farms and factories to be visited if permissions are granted at all.

The more unusual the request, the more unlikely it is that it can be met through the facilities of Intourist. It would certainly not be within its power, for example, to arrange a visit to a forced labor camp, and for this reason we delayed raising this question until we had a chance to talk with the one key government figure we met in the Soviet Union, the Deputy Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko. It is obviously only someone on Mr. Gromyko's level who could give this kind of permission, and unfortunately his response to our inquiries was sufficiently cool to discourage us from pressing the matter any further.

Less striking examples of the relatively low standing of Intourist in the Soviet hierarchy of influence may be found in our failure to arrange visits to a Moscow food warehouse, to the Ministry of Trade, or to a village where we had a literary interest which was only 30 miles from a city in which we spent five days. These frustrations must be faced by the tourist who visits in the Soviet Union, for there are no alternative means of organizing his trip, but it must be noted that they can be minimized if one is persistent and if he is blessed with a particularly able Intourist representative, as we were on the Asian part of our visit.

Extent of Travel

Our 30 days in the Soviet Union were spent for the most part in the well-known European cities of Leningrad, Moscow, Stalingrad, Rostov, Kiev and Minsk. Four of our group spent five days in Penza, a smaller town 400 miles southeast of Moscow; and two spent ten days in Central Asia, getting as far east as Alma Ata on the Chinese border and visiting also Tashkent in Uzbekistan and Akmolinsk in Kazakhstan.

Each new city seemed to provide startling changes in our total picture of the Soviet Union. We saw Leningrad in early June, its residents bundled up rather drably against the cold of the late spring and its buildings generally in a state of disrepair. Swift moving and colorful Moscow with its influx of Soviet tourists from all corners of the U.S.S.R. created an entirely different impression of Soviet vitality. Penza's more relaxed atmosphere, the tremendous surge of energy expressed in the rebuilding of war-torn Stalingrad and Minsk, the prosperous air of the city of Rostov (which we only glimpsed), the European beauty of Kiev, the contrast of Uzbek and Russian culture in Tashkent, the beauty and cheerfulness of Alma Ata, the frontier quality of dusty Akmolinsk—all these varied impressions, together with our increasingly rich store of personal experiences as we traveled, gave us a realization of the complexity and variety of the country that cannot be gained from Moscow alone.

Means of Travel

In so large a nation as the Soviet Union (nearly three times the size of the United States), flying is the only way to cover long distances within the time limits of the usual tourist visa; and so with three exceptions all our travel between cities was done by air. Our experiences were the same as those of other tourists—the two-motored planes flying very low, the lack of

seat belts and certain other safety precautions to which we were accustomed in the West, the dirt runways, the punctuality of arrival and departure. Our reserved seats, usually grouped together in the front of the plane, reduced our opportunities to get into conversation with the Soviet passengers. But we did occasionally meet interesting persons in the course of our flights, such as a pretty airline stewardess reading a translation of Zola; a young woman architect reading a modern British novel, James Aldrich's *The Diplomat,* in Russian translation; and an amiably argumentative Marxist engineer. The exceptions to plane travel were a train trip that two members of our group took from Moscow to Minsk; a two-day boat trip from Stalingrad down the Volga River, through the locks of the Volga-Don Canal, and down the Don River to Rostov; and an overnight train trip from Moscow to Leningrad that William Edgerton took during his second month in Russia, after the rest of us had returned home.

In the course of this travel we soon found that as far as Soviet cities are concerned, the western visitor is not subjected to the kind of police surveillance that has been persistently reported by travelers in earlier years. With only a few exceptions we were able to wander at will and alone around the cities, observing without interference the showplace and the slum, the new and the old, the rich and the poor. As far as farm visits were concerned, we have already noted that these were made on an approval basis to farms selected by local officials. For this reason there is no doubt that they were representative of the better rather than the poorer side of Soviet agriculture. On the other hand, we made most of them in areas not frequented by tourists and therefore to farms not geared especially to entertaining visitors, which from our standpoint made the experience more valuable.

Industries Visited

We saw only two major industrial establishments, a textile plant in Tashkent and a tractor factory in Minsk. However, both of these installations were large, and in the case of the tractor plant, our visit was the first by westerners. In both cases we were impressed with the self-contained communities that have grown up around the plants and which are planned and financed by the same ministry operating the factory. Indeed, the provision of company housing is one of the factors making for labor stability, since housing accommodations are tight everywhere. We likewise were impressed with the modern production methods being employed, although we were not equipped to

evaluate them in terms of American methods, and lack enough confidence in the statistics we gathered regarding production and labor relations to make them a part of this report.

We are well aware of the danger of drawing any sweeping conclusions on the basis of a 30-day visit. Our impressions are bound to be fragmentary and, as we have said, influenced by our prejudices and preconceptions. Perhaps the most important of these was a conviction that it is impossible to carve the world up into "good" parts and "evil" parts. Man is a mixture of both, and wherever he is, one may find evidence of both his nobility and his weakness. Therefore, we expected to find some things in the Soviet Union of which we could approve and some things of which we could sharply disapprove. That is what happened. In the chapters that follow we record our observations, recognizing their fragmentary nature but believing they may be useful in the face of the great need for first-hand reports of the Soviet scene.

II

Soviet Man and Soviet Society

One of the strongest impressions we received of Soviet society, whether urban or rural, is what the Soviet leaders themselves call its "monolithic" structure. "All power to the Soviets" was among the slogans the Bolsheviks used in their struggle to gain control of the government in 1917, and that slogan has been fulfilled literally in the Soviet Union. Such concepts as separation of powers, political pluralism or sovereignty of the people play no real part in Soviet thought or action. There is no complex network of independent civic clubs, professional associations, business groups, labor unions, veterans' organizations, political parties, women's clubs, church groups and other organizations, like those that compete for a citizen's loyalty in an open society and in turn give him an opportunity to make his influence felt. All the numerous organizations in the Soviet Union (with the possible — and partial — exception of the churches) are controlled directly or indirectly by the Communist Party. We noticed doors marked "Party Section" when we visited Moscow University, the office of a leading newspaper and a branch of the Academy of Sciences. These doors had their counterparts in all other Soviet organizations except the churches.

The role of the Communist Party in Soviet life is so vastly different from that which is associated with a political party in the West that we must refer once again to our analogy with a militant authoritarian church, in which we called the Communist Party the priesthood of the Soviet religion. (We should point out, however, that the policy of allowing no organization to exist without their approval and no periodical, book or pamphlet to be published without their authorization was not introduced into Russian society by the Communists. Numerous examples could be cited from tsarist history.)

The extent to which the position of the Communist Party has become a permanent fixture in the thinking of the average Soviet citizen may be judged by the story we heard from a native Russian about a foreign visitor from a non-Communist country who was having trouble getting tickets for some special event in Moscow.

"Why don't you get your embassy to help you?" a Soviet acquaintance suggested.

"Oh, they wouldn't bother with a matter like that," the foreign visitor replied.

"They wouldn't!" the Soviet citizen exclaimed. "Then why don't you go straight to your embassy's Party cell and protest?"

Drab Uniformity

This monolithic character of Soviet society tempts the newcomer to plunge into easy generalizations. Before he has traveled far in the Soviet Union he begins to feel confident that he can make certain predictions about what he will find in the next town. The statues in the town parks and the paintings on the walls of public buildings will deal almost exclusively with certain standard variations on the twin themes of Lenin and Stalin. (Our religious analogy would suggest a parallel here to the cult of the Virgin and Child in medieval Christian art. The Communist substitution of a stern father-image for a loving mother-image might provide an interesting subject of speculation for the psychologists and sociologists.) Some of the streets, factories and neighboring collective farms will almost invariably be named for Lenin, Stalin, Molotov, Dzerzhinski, or the Communist martyr Kirov. The town's leading theater will very likely be named after either Gorki or Mayakovski.

There is indeed a drab uniformity about the appearance of Soviet Main Street which probably finds its closest parallel in the flashy uniformity of Main Street in America. But we suspect that the standardized external appearance of Soviet towns may be almost as misleading to the foreign visitor as the standardized appearance of American towns is to foreign visitors to the United States.

The foreigner in the Soviet Union is likely to form an oversimplified picture of the country because of the age-old cultivation of secrecy in Russian officialdom. This was illustrated for us by such things as the scarcity of telephone directories in Moscow (the only copy we ever saw was one we borrowed from a foreign newspaper correspondent), the reluctance of officials to give us such statistics as the population of a town or the number of public schools in it and the denial of permission for us to visit the Baltic area. We know another foreign visitor who was given permission to visit a certain man on a chicken farm but later found out that orders had been issued not to allow him to get a look at any of the chickens or eggs while he was there. This Russian cult of secrecy tends to arouse suspicions in foreign

visitors even where none are justified. The trend in recent months toward some relaxation of restrictions is encouraging, and we hope it will continue long enough to create a real change in relations between the inhabitants of the Soviet Union and those of the outside world.

The picture of the average Soviet citizen that we formed for ourselves in the course of some 12,000 miles of travel within the Soviet Union is of a man who accepts the Soviet system in which he lives somewhat as the Swiss accept their mountains, the English their fogs and the Arabs their desert. It is a fact of nature. One does not actually accept it or reject it, and still less does one attempt to change it; one simply adjusts to it. The overwhelming majority of the Soviet citizens we met appeared to have adjusted to it so completely that they found it difficult to imagine what life must be like in that great area of the outside world which, by dint of being non-Communist, is defined in Soviet terms as "capitalist."

We met Communist Party members who obviously believed wholeheartedly and devoutly in the Marxist-Leninist faith. We met non-Party members who likewise accepted the faith and insisted that they enjoyed equal rights with Party members in every respect (but — as we observed — only because they too accepted the faith and worked within it). We also met enough dissidents to make us insist upon saying here that the great mass of Soviet citizens have adjusted to the Soviet system rather than saying that they have accepted it.

Policies Unquestioned

Nowhere did we find anybody—whether a Party member or not — whose attitude toward his own government revealed even a trace of that sense of personal responsibility for making his voice heard on issues of policy which we consider to be a part of the very essence of democracy. For the Soviet citizen participation in political affairs means participation in implementing, explaining and arousing mass support of policies that have already been formulated by higher authorities. He accepts whatever policies they formulate as the correct ones because they are by definition the greatest experts in what is by definition the one true faith. For the average Soviet citizen openly to question whether the Soviet system really was the best would be more unthinkable — and far more dangerous — than for a member of, let us say, the U. S. Chamber of Commerce or the National Association of Manufacturers to cast doubts on the basic principles of American free enterprise.

This does not mean that the Soviet citizen has no opportunity to criticize. He is even encouraged to criticize the performance of individuals at the lower levels of government, and we saw evidence that this privilege is exercised, and perhaps even abused at times. For example, from our hotel window in one provincial town we observed the great restraint of a militia man (the Communist equivalent of "policeman") in handling a rowdy citizen who berated him long and loudly before a growing crowd. The sulphuric language even included — perhaps ironically—the use of the term "Soviet man!"

Fear of America

The average Soviet citizen has no information whatever about the outside world except what has been filtered through the officially controlled Soviet channels of communication. He is deeply concerned about peace because he knows the cost of war. He genuinely fears the United States because he has been led to believe that capitalism inevitably produces crises which lead inevitably to war. The United States is pictured to him as the center of reactionary capitalism whose ruling circles insist on imposing military bases and German rearmament upon an unwilling world. This fear of America, however, does not make him hate Americans, for the Soviet press commonly distinguishes between the American people and their rulers (but neglects to reconcile such a distinction with the fact that the rulers are both chosen and removed by the vote of the American people).

A member of our group once asked directions of two women on the outskirts of Moscow and was almost immediately drawn into a conversation about their great fear of war and desire for peace. When he told them the American people shared both their fear and that desire, the two women looked genuinely surprised and relieved. Then one of them said thoughtfully, "Yes, that makes sense; I'm sure the American *people* don't want war —it's just the capitalists!" (In answer he told them he had heard the same thing about them in America: "The Russian *people* don't want war—it's just the Communists!")

Our experience made us feel that most Soviet citizens have no understanding of what is meant in the West by a "free society." Relatively few persons living today in the Soviet Union have any personal memories of pre-Revolutionary Russia, and there was little in Russia before the Revolution that would add to their understanding of the term. Lacking any means of comparing Soviet society with that of the outside world, they tend to compare their situation today with what it was formerly;

and time and time again we were told, by dissidents as well as supporters of the regime, that things are now better than they were a few years ago. (No one ever specifically said "better than they were before Stalin's death.")

Virtually everywhere we found immense pride in the achievements of their government—a pride that is all the greater because most Soviet citizens have no means of comparing these achievements with those of other countries. This pride is nowhere more apparent than in the realm of their educational achievement. Indeed, the satisfaction felt by the Russian people in their new opportunity for education is one point where government policy has won an endorsement that far exceeds the passive acceptance previously referred to. It has been necessary to educate the masses in order to carry out industrialization and to build support for Marxism, but there is no doubt that the people have genuinely benefited in the process.

Even among Soviet citizens who disagreed fundamentally with certain aspects of the official Marxist faith we found a general belief in the justice and correctness of Soviet policies and an acceptance of much of the official Soviet interpretation of international affairs. All this convinced us that Soviet political advertisers and American commercial advertisers have made the same useful and dangerous discovery about human nature: the public may claim to be skeptical about all advertising, but very few persons can develop an immunity to repeated doses of it.

Standard of Living

Having thus sketched our view of the basic orientation of the average Soviet citizen, we want to record our observations on the way he lives, the problems he has to contend with and the standards of living that are to be found in his society. Obviously these vary between city and country and among various economic and social strata. The well-placed Party functionary, the army officer, the successful artist or scholar, the farm or factory manager and the Stakhanovite* all enjoy a standard of living and an exemption from many of life's problems that set them apart from Soviet society as a whole. In this respect Soviet society is no different from any other: it has a privileged class and a laboring mass, and the spread between the two is not dissimilar to that which is found, for example, in the United States. In the Minsk tractor plant we were told that the monthly

* Stakhanovite—A worker who produces more than the norms set for his job and consequently receives bonus payments and other rewards.

wage of an apprentice worker was 350 rubles, and in Moscow we learned that the rector of the university receives 12,000 rubles a month, or almost 35 times as much. This is roughly equivalent to the difference in earnings between the office boy and the president of an American corporation.

There are, however, some important qualifications to comparisons of this kind. First, the number of persons in the "comfortable" income brackets in the Soviet Union would be relatively much smaller, and the number in the lower income brackets much larger. This difference is even more striking when one realizes that the Soviet income tax has a maximum of only 13 per cent, as compared to the American maximum in the highest income brackets of 91 per cent. Second, it is important to remember that the Soviet citizen does not compare his lot with that of his American counterpart, of whom he knows nothing, but rather with the lot of his own father and grandfather. For this reason, any analysis of Soviet problems and living standards that is based primarily on comparisons between the United States and the Soviet Union is somewhat irrelevant.

It will be abundantly evident in what follows that Soviet living standards are far below American standards, though we do not feel that this comparison in itself can be taken to mean the "failure" of the Soviet system. We propose to confine ourselves here to generalizations about living standards based upon what we saw in large cities, in one typical provincial town in which we spent five days and on collective farms. In estimating wages and prices we assume a ruble value of 10 cents, because this appears to us to be a closer approximation to its real worth than the artificial value of 25 cents that the Soviet government assigns to it for exchange purposes.

III

Soviet City Lights

Undoubtedly the most serious problem for the city dweller is adequate living quarters. All the cities we visited, whether large and cosmopolitan like Moscow or small and provincial like Penza, had a housing shortage that dwarfs similar problems in Western Europe or America. This shortage has many causes, of which population growth, war devastation, an unskilled labor force and the priority given by the government to the expansion of heavy industry are probably the most important. As a result, today's city worker may well have to live with his family in a single room, sharing kitchen facilities with several other families. In smaller towns like Penza and Akmolinsk he will probably also have the added problem of carrying all his water from a distant pump.

In ancient "wooden" Russia the log house was the typical form of dwelling, and to this day much of wooden Russia is still to be seen in the outlying sections of Moscow and in many provincial towns. In Penza, for example, we had only to walk two or three blocks away from the main street in order to find ourselves surrounded by ancient and often picturesque wooden houses standing in rows behind their wooden fences that line the dirt streets. The present trend wherever we traveled, however, is to replace these log houses with massive apartment buildings six or seven stories high, constructed of brick and reinforced concrete with a facing designed to resemble stone.

In war-devastated Stalingrad and Minsk we found astonishing progress in reconstruction. Both cities have arisen from the rubble of World War II in a decade, and new housing is available for a large part of the population. According to figures we read in the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia,* 120,000 square meters of living space, comprising about 4000 apartments, were due to be constructed in Stalingrad in 1955. (This means, incidentally, that the average size of these apartments was 30 square meters, or a space about 10 feet wide and 30 feet long.) Minsk, the capital of Byelo-Russia, had a population of about a million people in 1940. When the war ended, 85 percent of it was in ruins, and in the decade that has elapsed, 85 percent of it has been rebuilt. New streets have been laid out, new parks created,

new factories and schools and stores built and 750,000 people rehoused. The visitor cannot fail to be impressed by this massive operation, and we found it impossible to move in any direction even today without the constant presence of the cranes and trucks that bear witness to the continuing effort.

In contrast to this, the inhabitants of Moscow and Leningrad appear to be less favored. According to *Izvestia,* 910,000 square meters of living space were completed in Moscow in 1954, and 1,000,000 square meters were planned for 1955. While the figure for 1955 is said to be four times the space produced for Moscow in 1948, we estimate that it would comprise only about 33,000 new dwelling units, which is little more than enough to keep up with the population growth, according to the figures we were given.

New Housing Stressed

As we walked about the streets of Moscow we were often surprised to look through the archway of a large new apartment house and see a row of dilapidated, tumble-down tenement houses on the other side of the inner courtyard. These are the scenes that have often made foreign tourists bring back totally contradictory reports of what they saw in Moscow. Some of them, it would appear, saw only the new apartment houses, and others saw only the slums. Actually both are there in full view. Our impression was that the Soviet authorities were putting virtually all their housing funds into new apartments rather than diverting any sizable part of their funds for the repair of older buildings that were due to be replaced eventually anyhow.

If a clerk or worker is dispossessed by a new development, or if he is living in condemned housing, or if he is overcrowded even by Soviet standards, he will have priority on a new apartment. Otherwise, the chances are that he will have to stay where he is for a very long time. We tried to find out whether "connections" or bribes could influence the allocation of new housing. This was firmly denied, but since returning home we have come across several articles in the Soviet newspapers exposing this very kind of favoritism. It would indeed be difficult to imagine that favoritism and graft could be entirely prevented in a situation where the pressures are so great that apartment buildings can be seen to be fully occupied before the construction crews have finished applying the exterior facing.

Although the city dweller has this enormous housing problem, it is entirely a problem of shortage and not of finance. All rental housing is heavily subsidized, so that the average worker

needs to apply less than five percent of his monthly pay for the occupancy of a room 13 feet square (which unfortunately is as much living space as many are able to get). Kitchen and plumbing facilities are rent-free. Theoretically, the worker is allowed 9 square meters of space for each person in his family at the subsidized rate of 18 rubles a month. This would mean that a family of five is entitled to 45 square meters at a total rent of 90 rubles, or about 11 percent of an average worker's monthly income of 800 rubles. Since housing is at such a premium, however, it is the rare worker who enjoys such spacious quarters—or has to pay such a high proportion of his monthly earnings for shelter.

The shortage of living accommodations is by no means accepted without complaint by the city dweller. Indeed, it seemed to us that public dissatisfaction in housing matters was more vigorously manifested than in any other area of daily life. This places considerable pressure on the authorities to speed up new housing; and we have found numerous criticisms in the Soviet press of the construction organizations responsible for the work, such as the accusation that one construction trust had taken three years and a half to put up one four-story house and seven years to build another.

It is significant that the loudest laughs we heard at the Moscow circus were in response to a housing joke. One clown rushed to the center of the circus ring shouting that he had just written a book.

"What about?" asked a second clown.
"Boy meets girl," said the first.
"Ah, a story!"
"They fall in love."
"A romance!"
"They get married and find an apartment."
"A fable!"

Industrial Financing

While the supervision of housing is a responsibility of the city councils, much of the actual construction is undertaken and financed by industrial enterprises, which are permitted by their governing ministry to allocate funds from corporation income to build apartments and other facilities for their own workers. At a new textile mill in Tashkent, for example, we found rather good company housing provided for 70 percent of its labor force of 20,000 men; which means, when families are added in, that

about 56,000 persons have been housed in this single development.

In the large apartment houses heating is from central plants. Smaller units are frequently heated with wood or coal. Cooking in Moscow is done either by gas or on electric hot plates (according to the Soviet press gas was installed in 34,000 Moscow apartments in 1954), but wood and coal are more common in the smaller towns. We were not impressed with the floor plans of even the newest apartments, and unfortunately the almost total lack of structural steel in housing construction does not permit the large windows and airy apartments that characterize modern Western-type buildings.

Besides the lack of steel for building purposes, which presents architectural problems, Soviet construction labors under other difficulties. The work force is largely inxeperienced, and men and women must learn their trade while practising it. We visited one Moscow couple who had moved into their apartment in a tremendous new housing development on the edge of the city while the apartment building next door was still under construction. Our hosts pointed to a window in their living room and told us that the inexperienced operator of a construction crane had made a mistake one day and knocked the window out. The construction foreman apologized and had the window replaced at once. Then the same thing happened once more a few days later. Our hosts declared that when they dashed out and complained to the foreman again, he apologetically explained: "Well, you see, we figured that if it had to happen, it was better for it to happen where we had already gotten acquainted!"

The devastation and enormous loss of life produced by World War II has placed such a premium on construction workers that almost anyone is acceptable for employment. Posters may still be seen in various parts of the country advertising this need and listing the rewards available to the recruit. In one of Moscow's poorer sections, for example, we found a poster calling for workers to "help construct Moscow and other cities" and offering (1) a bonus of 150 to 600 rubles to help a family get settled in the new place of work, (2) travel expenses, (3) 10 to 15 rubles of spending money for each day's travel to the new location and (4) guaranteed housing at the scene of construction, with "all the necessary furnishings, including a bed." With such large numbers of unskilled laborers on the job it is not surprising that quality does not keep pace with quantity.

There is, however, a still more serious cause of poor quality

—more serious because it seems to us to be a defect inherent in the Soviet system and therefore difficult to eradicate. The Soviet system is so highly centralized and bureaucratized that competition plays a very insignificant role as an incentive to the improvement of the quality of production. Apart from propaganda efforts to arouse a sense of social responsibility in the worker, the chief incentive he has is the piecework system of wage-payments with its bonuses for "overfulfilling" the norms established for each job. This system emphasizes quantity rather than quality, and the effects are to be seen throughout Soviet production, but nowhere more clearly than in building construction. We saw a school building in Penza that had been completed only one year but was already undergoing major repairs at the time of our visit. We saw numerous examples of serious deterioration in buildings that had been standing no more than three or four years.

No Suburban Life

There seems to be virtually no parallel in the Soviet Union to the suburban developments that are found in Western countries. Even on the outskirts of Moscow the new living quarters one sees under construction are not single houses standing on their own plots of ground, but are huge apartment buildings, where hundreds of families will be crowded almost as closely together as if they lived in the center of the city. One is tempted to see this as a further manifestation of the philosophy of collectivism that dominates all Soviet life.

An exception among the cities we visited was Stalingrad, where small individual stucco houses of a modern type are being built in considerable numbers on the outskirts of the city. These houses are individually owned, and most of them are financed by loans from a government agency set up for the purpose. (The ground they stand on, however, like all land in the Soviet Union, belongs to the state and is leased to the owners of the houses.)

Another type of private home, which is obviously for the better-situated rather than the average worker, is the *dacha,* or summer cottage, which may be located in the country a few miles from a major city or in some distant resort area, such as the Crimea. Privately owned houses may be bought and sold or rented. When we asked an Intourist guide what kept Soviet citizens from buying more than one house and renting the extra ones as a source of income, we received the reply, "Why should anybody want more than one house?" This answer struck us

as being based more on the Soviet ideal than on Soviet reality, if we may judge by such Soviet newspaper articles as the recent one in *Izvestia* exposing the Smolensk bureaucrat who was transferred to Moscow in 1953 and left his Smolensk apartment in charge of his grown daughter, who was said to rent part of it at a high price. "This case is not unique," added *Izvestia*.

Food Supply

We found the study of diet and food distribution one of the most revealing and absorbing aspects of our whole observation of Soviet living standards. An examination of the food supply problems of the city worker clearly shows the way in which the national economy operates to benefit the worker at the expense of the farmer, and offers further insight into the price the Soviet citizen pays for his government's preoccupation with heavy industry and arms production.

The primary source of foodstuffs in the cities is the state store, or *gastronom*. Food in these stores is very cheap and reflects the fixed government policy of holding down living costs. The collective farms are required to sell a substantial proportion of their produce to the state at prices considerably below free-market values. While this policy makes possible cheap food in the cities and insures substantial government income in the form of a turnover tax, it is also bound to be one of the important factors in the unrest that has been persistently reported from rural sections of the Soviet Union and that was reflected in the government agricultural policies of the Malenkov period.

Even though the state stores provide the city worker with a source of cheap food, they by no means provide him with a solution to his food problems, particularly if he lives in one of the larger cities. Inadequate facilities for transportation and refrigeration place severe limits upon the variety of food available in the state stores. In Moscow, Stalingrad and Leningrad, for example, we noted that state stores offered few fresh vegetables and even less fresh fruit. Meat and dairy products were available, but the customer had to stand in queues to get them, and the supplies were sometimes exhausted before all were served. The scarcity of these items is emphasized by the state-store window displays, which consist of dummy meats and dairy products, considerably deficient in the socialist realism that is the official watchword of Soviet art. In general, the state stores provide a good supply of canned foods including some meat and fish products as well as vegetables, fruits and jams. In one state store in Moscow we saw a sizable stock of Russian caviar in

cans labeled in English, and learned that this was caviar originally prepared for export to the United States before the Cold War brought East-West trade to a standstill. Some of the stores also sell bottled champagne, wine and vodka, and constitute the principal source of alcoholic beverages since the closing of public drinking places in connection with the current campaign against alcoholism.

This description of state-store food stocks needs to be modified considerably to fit cities located in rich agricultural regions. In Kiev and Penza, for example, we found a wider variety of fresh foods for sale than in Stalingrad, which is located in a semi-arid region. This variation between cities provides graphic evidence of the way in which food distribution in the Soviet Union is complicated by the lack of adequate transport facilities.

An important secondary source of food for the city dweller is the collective farm markets that are found in every Soviet city. These markets are the outlet for the portion of farm produce that has not been sold to the state at low fixed prices. The collectives take their food to the large open-air markets in trucks supplied by the state at reasonable rates and sell it at prices considerably above state-store prices—sometimes as much as two or three times higher. Here the city dweller can find good supplies of fresh food, but unless several members of the family work, the average family cannot afford to buy heavily. For example, we noted that beefsteak was selling at the 26 collective farm markets that are scattered over Moscow at the equivalent of about $1.40 a pound. Fish was 60 cents a pound, eggs 15 cents each, flour 50 cents a pound and carrots 35 cents a pound. Figuring the value of the ruble at the same rate—10 cents—the earnings of the average worker or clerk are only $80 a month. This shows the difficulty the city housewife has in providing her family with a varied diet, and explains the statistical increase in the consumption of bread and grain products that American economists have noted as an indication of an approaching agricultural crisis in the Soviet Union.

Private Marketing

An additional feature of the collective farm markets is the small peasant stalls where individual farmers may sell their own produce. More than 99 percent of all Soviet farms are collectivized, but the members of the collectives are permitted to have small plots of land for their own use. We found these varying in size from a third of an acre to an acre and a half in the various parts of the Soviet Union that we visited. These

plots are tended by the farmer in his spare time or by other members of his family, and he is free to sell the produce in the city markets for whatever it will bring. Moreover, most farmers prefer to be paid in kind for their regular work on the collective farm, because this produce, too, may be sold at the free market and the return is greater than the cash value of farm labor payments. Some of the best food we saw was in these small peasant stalls—and it was priced accordingly.

These methods of food distribution are far from efficient, and probably will remain so until better facilities are developed for transportation and refrigeration. The most extreme example we found of this inefficiency was the Caucasian peasant we met selling oranges in one of the Moscow farm markets. A member of an orange collective in the Georgian Republic, this man had taken pay for his accumulated work credits in the form of four crates of oranges. He had put his oranges in an airplane, flown a thousand miles to Moscow, was selling them in the free market, and planned to fly back to the Caucasus afterwards—with his profits. Considering his expenses, his price of 60 cents per orange was not exorbitant, but neither did it suggest mass consumption. (One of our group did notice some competition for our Georgian friend in the orange market: under the columned portico of the Lenin Library building another orange merchant, origin unknown, had set up shop with a set of portable scales and several crates of oranges bearing labels indicating that they had been imported all the way from Portugal and French Morocco.)

All of these difficulties in getting food do not prevent the Russian from entertaining lavishly on occasion. Indeed, we found them so hospitable that we were occasionally embarrassed by our failure to do justice to the huge banquets that were served to us when we were invited to dine in private homes. On these occasions the meal usually started with a profusion of cold dishes, including sausages, meat, black and red caviar, salads and fish, such as sprats and herring, prepared in oil. At first we made the mistake of assuming that this was the meal, and found ourselves scarcely able to cope with the even more elaborate courses that followed. Soup was usually the second course and was followed by a main dish of sturgeon, beef or poultry, sometimes prepared according to special regional recipes. Once we were completely overwhelmed to have this main dish followed by an ample serving of ham and eggs. The end of the meal would find the table laden with cakes, fruits, chocolates and nuts for dessert.

At the Baptist minister's home in Tashkent this was unexpectedly supplemented by a large tray of ice cream in cones. It turned out that the minister's wife, upon hearing that ice cream was an American favorite, had dispatched one of her 14 children to purchase a generous supply so that her guests "would really feel at home." Although we had already eaten too much, we rose to the occasion and duly did justice to the ice cream. Incidentally, ice cream is as popular in the Soviet Union as in the United States and is sold everywhere from small white enameled pushcarts by white-aproned women—the Soviet equivalent of the American Good Humor man. The cost of a good-sized cone is two rubles — approximately 20 cents — but smaller quantities are available for less.

Needless to say, the sort of banquet we have described here is reserved for very special occasions. We always felt inadequate in our efforts to thank our hosts, but they would graciously overwhelm us still further by assuring us that they, not we, had been the ones honored. On one occasion a Baptist minister simply responded by quoting from the thirteenth chapter of Hebrews: "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares!"

Clothing Expensive

Clothing is the Soviet family's chief financial problem. All clothing is expensive because of short supplies, and the average family must sacrifice at many points to avoid presenting a shabby, ragged appearance. In general they succeed well, for we found city clothing for the most part to be clean, neat and adequate, though lacking in variety and style. Women's wear in June ran heavily to cotton in conventional flower prints, and was not notable for its fit or styling — at least by Western standards. The same might be said for men's wear, although the Westerner's feeling that it lacked style could be attributed in part to the Soviet preference for bell-bottomed trousers. Only at the opera and theater, where the choice seats were evidently filled by the élite of Soviet society, did we see clothing that looked chic and well cut.

In Leningrad we were struck by the drabness of the clothing we saw. This may have been due merely to the fact that we entered the Soviet Union by way of Leningrad, coming straight from vastly different Helsinki; but it may also have reflected Leningrad's peculiar economic situation, or the northern Soviet climate, which required more warmth in wearing

apparel. Whatever the reason, we noted a predominance of browns and blacks and a shabbiness that seemed to disappear the farther south we moved. The brightest and most cheerful clothing we saw anywhere was in Tashkent and Alma Ata—which, significantly, are cotton-producing regions, with textile mills playing an important role in the local economy. This suggested to us that regional officials tended very naturally to favor their own people in distribution schedules despite the existence of carefully worked-out merchandizing plans for the Soviet Union as a whole.

As is true in most cultures, Soviet children are provided with the best while their parents do with second best. The children in Leningrad, particularly, were wearing coats, often with embroidery, that appeared to be newer and of better quality than those we saw on older people. In warmer climates we noticed less difference except for footwear. Children everywhere wore better shoes than their parents. As for infants' wear, Russian custom still demands a superabundance of clothes. We found the babies typically swathed in blankets and sweaters to the point where only their noses peeped out even in the warm June weather.

Most women in the cities go without hats, and those who wear them would often be better off bareheaded if Western styles are used as a basis for judgment. Much more common than hats, even in cities, is the familiar kerchief tied around the head. The prevailing summer headgear for men, when any is worn at all, is the flat Russian cap rather than a hat.

It is not surprising that dresses and coats lack style, that shoes are often made of artificial leather and that Russian men commonly seem to wear ill-fitting shirts, when one discovers the cost of clothing. We estimated, on the basis of clothing prices in a number of Moscow stores, that even a rather poor pair of shoes would cost seven or eight days' pay from the wages of the average worker. A single-piece cotton print dress for his wife would mean a week's work; and a suit of clothes for himself, from one to two months' work. Men's work shirts of very poor quality could be had for 35 rubles—a day's pay—but shirts of better grade cost up to 250 rubles—more than a week's earnings for the average factory worker or clerk.

Quality clothing is available in the cities but is entirely out of the range of the average family income. In Moscow beautiful fur coats are on sale at the state department store on Red Square for 20,000 rubles, but we saw no purchasers. There are expensive dress shops in the neighborhood of the

Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, and we noted similar shops in Kiev, Stalingrad, Minsk and Tashkent.

Those of us who had hoped to return home with samples of beautiful Russian embroidery and handicrafts were discouraged by the prices, which were quite beyond our reach because of the artificial exchange rate given to the Soviet ruble. Embroidered blouses of any quality, for example, began (for us) at 65 dollars. Our dismay at these prices led to our acquaintance with another widespread Soviet institution, the commission store, through which anybody—including foreigners—can sell his belongings at authorized prices in return for an authorized commission. All over Moscow there are numerous commission stores, each specializing in the sale of a particular kind of goods, such as men's clothing, women's clothing, furniture or jewelry. By utilizing these facilities, we were able to get handsome ruble returns for our own clothing and to use the proceeds to purchase embroidered blouses and other desired items.

Schools and Clinics

Food, shelter and clothing are the primary problems in the life of the city worker. In other areas of life we found him reasonably well taken care of—indeed, better off budgetwise in some ways than his Western counterpart. His children are assured of ten years of schooling. Tuition is free for the first seven years and low (if there is any charge at all) for the last three, and school supplies and books are so heavily subsidized that education is not a drain on the family budget. The same is true of medical service. A widespread system of free clinics is available to all, and the only cost to the Soviet family is a small charge for medicines. If private consultations are desired, they are available on a fee basis. Charges are five rubles for a consultation with a general practitioner and ten for a specialist —reasonable fees, it would appear, for an economy in which the average worker earns about four rubles an hour. In Leningrad it appeared that the private services were being better utilized than the free clinics.

The Soviet family also enjoys extensive coverage under the non-contributory social security program. The system is largely administered by the labor unions and provides for maternity and accident benefits as well as retirement income. The Soviet worker qualifies for retirement at the age of 60, but if he is capable of continuing to work he may do so, receiving a portion of his retirement benefits in addition to his normal factory pay. Pay-

ments are geared to earnings and length of service, however, so that there is a premium on productivity and stability.

Nor is transportation a serious problem for the city dweller. We were impressed by the quantity and quality of public transport available in all the Soviet cities we visited, with the exception of Akmolinsk. The trolley-bus and the trolley-car are at least as common as city busses, and the fares on all three are moderate, ranging from 20 to 50 kopeks, according to the distance traveled. Our average worker could thus cover his daily commuting costs with 10 to 20 minutes' work. In Moscow, of course, he has the choice of the famous subway system, with a fare of 50 kopeks (half a ruble) and excellent service, to say nothing of the marble and alabaster stations, the indirect lighting and the vaulted ceilings of this most sumptuous of underground railroads.

The Soviet Union is not yet truly in the automobile age, but we found it moving more rapidly toward it than we had supposed. Truck traffic still predominates and provides evidence that the nation is still in the building stage. Trucks are everywhere. Almost all are of Soviet production, but a few old United States Army "six-by-six" vehicles dating from lend-lease days are still to be seen. Within the cities, however, there is a rising tide of passenger automobiles, many of them privately owned; and we feel the day is coming when Soviet planners will regret their failure to provide for parking facilities in their city-planning programs.

Autos are not yet within the range of the average worker, but we found the smaller models being acquired by second and third-echelon management. They doubtless are also available to the more successful workers of the Stakhanovite group. There are a half-dozen different car models, but of these only four are in common use. Most expensive and luxurious is the ZIS, which is not on private sale and is reserved exclusively for government use and taxi service. This car is built with dies purchased some years ago from the Packard Motor Company, so that the Soviet Union is the only place in the world where one can now buy a brand new 1941 Packard. Model changes are not made yearly, as in the United States, and the only concession to progress that we noted was the two-tone paint styles that mark late production.

Right behind the ZIS is the ZIM,* a large Russian-designed car similar in style and appearance to the 1949 Buick. These

* ZIS and ZIM—Abbreviations for "Factory named for Stalin" and "Factory named for Molotov."

cars, too, are largely in government and taxi service, but a few of the most favored Soviet citizens can afford to own them privately at the price of 40,000 rubles. Much more reasonably priced is the Pobeda, which resembles a lightweight Chevrolet of about 1949 and may be had for 16,000 rubles—about 20 months' pay for the average worker. This is the most popular family car, and enough Russians are in a position to afford one that it requires a year's wait after payment before delivery can be expected. A smaller car, the Moskvich, may be purchased for only 9,000 rubles, but its small size apparently makes it somewhat less attractive to the Russian family. Gasoline prices are high, but by European standards not exorbitant—averaging around 90 kopeks a liter (about 40 cents a gallon) and available at 73 kopeks for those possessing a special gasoline card.

The Car-less Family

The Soviet city family without a car finds most of its recreation close to home. A worker's factory or his union will probably have in connection with it a "house of culture," and here he and his family can attend concerts and plays. During the summer months the parks are crowded with families enjoying their day of rest. Occasionally a movie or a visit to the Dynamo Stadium for an international soccer match might be a possibility, but costs would keep these outings to a minimum, at least on a family basis.

In summary, it is our impression that everyday life for the city family in the Soviet Union is hard but not unbearable. To make it more acceptable, the first requirement is an enormous expansion in building construction so that the worker and his family may enjoy even a minimum standard of decency instead of having to live huddled together in a single room.

Many other improvements in everyday life are closely bound up with the availability of more iron and steel for civilian uses. Food resources could be distributed more cheaply, more plentifully and more efficiently if more refrigeration facilities and railroad rolling stock could be provided. The deplorable plumbing situation depends for its solution on the production of more pipe. Reduced clothing prices await an expanded textile industry, which in turn means more spinners and more looms. Consumer goods such as refrigerators and washing machines are still priced beyond the reach of the average Soviet family, and these too will not be available to ease the life of the housewife until ways can be found to get more steel into the production of consumer goods.

IV

Main Street, U.S.S.R.

Before entering the Soviet Union we had considered the possibility of living for a week or two in a relatively small community in European Russia while we surveyed its facilities, its economy, its attitudes and its problems. The idea appealed to us for two reasons. First, it would enable us to observe Soviet life in a setting far removed from the bustling cosmopolitan atmosphere of a great city like Moscow and would thus add another dimension to our understanding of the Russian scene. Second, we saw a small-town survey as perhaps the best method of gaining insight into the dynamics of Soviet society: the relations between governors and governed, the economics of distribution, the interaction of government agencies, the role of the Party, and so forth. This was our aim. In practice we were able to carry it out only in part.

We wanted to select an "average" provincial town that was well off the beaten path of foreign tourists. The town of Buzuluk, lying about 100 miles east of Kuibishev in the province of Samara, was our first choice, because Friends had centered their relief work there in the 1920's. However, we were told that Buzuluk was in the midst of an agricultural fair and had no room for foreign tourists—an excuse that we accepted as valid after a closer acquaintance with Russia's great housing problem. Our second choice then fell on the town of Penza, some 400 miles southeast of Moscow. Penza was selected because it appeared to meet our general specifications as to size and location and because it was in a region associated with the name of Nikolai Leskov, the Nineteenth Century Russian novelist in whom one of our group had a keen literary interest. Intourist appeared somewhat skeptical of our project, but arranged for accommodations and on June 15 we made the three-hour flight from Moscow to Penza, landing on the unpaved runway about six o'clock in the evening.

Penza is a provincial capital. Besides being an important railroad junction, it is an administrative and trading center for that agricultural area, and it has several small industries. The town dates back to 1666 and is noticeably proud of its past even though it has had a relatively quiet one. It escaped such cata-

clysms of Russian history as the invasions of Napoleon and Hitler, and it apparently weathered the Soviet Revolution and the subsequent civil war with somewhat less turmoil than many other towns in Russia. The local public library is named for the great poet Lermontov, who was born in the province; and the public square across the street from our hotel contained a statue of Vissarion Belinski, Russia's first great literary critic, who was born in the region and went to school in Penza. The regional museum calls attention to the fact that the father of Lenin once lived in the town and taught school there.

Big Small Town

Present-day Penza may have a population of as much as 175,000. According to the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia,* the count was 157,200 in the census of 1939, but no Penza official would commit himself about the population of the town today. Despite its size, in atmosphere it reminded us of a typical American country town of the early 1920's with a tenth of Penza's population. The stores held much the same goods as those of the showy sort in Moscow, and at the same fixed prices. The leading department store was always crowded; and as we walked through its aisles and looked at the arrangement of its goods, several of us were carried back in memory to the general country stores of our childhood. The unpainted log houses that marked the older parts of the town were reminiscent, too, of an earlier American era. An occasional independent merchant was to be seen on the streets, one of them selling handkerchiefs in uncut lengths. When a member of our group attempted a picture of this bit of free enterprise, he was berated soundly by a passer-by who thought the crowd around the handkerchief salesman was a queue and evidently felt we were seeking to photograph a blighted side of Soviet life. He insisted that this did not represent what the Russians were striving for. Obviously Russians, like Americans, prefer to be judged by their ideals rather than their reality. And Russians, like Americans, tend to judge other societies by their reality rather than their ideals.

The main street of Penza, called Moscow Street, was a never-ending source of interest to us. The shady side of the street was crowded with leisurely throngs of pedestrians all day long (Penza summers are hot), and both sides were crowded throughout the evening. Motor traffic was light and, apart from the very good system of trolley-busses, consisted chiefly of trucks. Horse-drawn wagons were practically as numerous as passenger cars and reminded us of Penza's role in the agricultural life of

the province. Three funerals on three successive days marched down Moscow Street past our hotel windows, with flowers and banners preceding an open casket and a dignified brass band bringing up the rear. A milk store across the street served a line of women each morning, turning away at least once the last few customers, their half-gallon pails empty, and closing its doors long before noon.

As the first Americans anyone could remember ever having seen in Penza we naturally attracted a good deal of attention wherever we went. At the big town market, thanks to Wroe Alderson's Polaroid camera, which produced finished snapshots in sixty seconds, we came close to bringing the town's economic life to a standstill; and the alarmed local policeman took our Russian-speaking member aside to find out just who we were and what we were up to. Incidentally, the Penza market, crowded with peasants and produce, was a barometer by which we could judge food supply and transportation. It was clear that the Penza housewife had far less difficulty in providing her family with an adequate diet than the housewife in Moscow.

Throughout our five days in Penza we met with innumerable examples of the same simple, unaffected friendliness and hospitality that we found wherever we traveled. We were given the best rooms in the town hotel, one of which had a private bath; and the hotel manager personally supervised the serving of our first meal in the parlor of the suite that was assigned to two members of our group. We varied our customary hotel fare by taking several meals at the Volga, the town's best restaurant, where the food and the service were equally good and the gracious proprietress treated us more like friends of the family than customers. Promptly at eight o'clock every evening the diners at the Volga would be entertained with a four-piece ensemble, consisting of a piano, accordion, violin and horn, which played Russian favorites and an occasional American dance tune of the 1920's or early 1930's. On our first visit to the restaurant we found to our dismay that our attractive and solicitous waitress had reserved a whole section of the crowded dining room for us, but when we protested against this well-meaning favoritism, the other tables in our section were promptly made available to Russians.

We were able to wander about the town at will, and our tours included several parks. Most were small with only grass and trees, a statue and a few ever-filled benches. The large Belinski Park of Culture and Rest, however, included a soccer stadium, an outdoor theater, a library, a special children's sec-

tion, a planetarium, the characteristically Russian parachute tower and enough wooded park space to accommodate up to 20,000 persons on holidays, according to the park director. We visited a movie theater as guests of the cordial woman manager, joining an attentive crowd of Russians in seeing an excellent color dramatization of Chekhov's story "The Grasshopper." We visited the provincial hospital and had an interview with the director, whose communicativeness—like that of so many of the other Soviet officials we met—seemed to be tempered by his uncertainty about our status. One of our members with a mild intestinal disorder was given a thorough examination by three of the hospital doctors, whose warm-hearted Russian friendliness was as impressive as their professional skill and thoroughness. The hospital looked clean, well-run, and fairly modern, if simple. We were told that more than half of the medical staff were women—a proportion that is characteristic of the whole Soviet medical profession.

Cultural Facilities

Besides its parks, the cultural life of Penza includes a sizable theater across a side street from our hotel, in which a play by Gorki was running during our visit; three movie houses; a permanent circus building; the Kirov House of Culture; the Dzerzhinski Club; and two public libraries, one of which has 287,000 books. (As in all Soviet libraries, however, the catalog used by the public lists only those books which are officially approved.) While we were in town the local daily newspaper, the *Stalin Banner,* devoted two-thirds of a page to advertisements of the fall terms of the various institutions of higher education in the province. Among them were a teachers' college, a music school, a school of pharmacy, a combined art school and training school for leaders of Young Pioneers (the Communist youth organization), a technical high school, a veterinary school, a school of commerce, a school for deaf mutes, a school for retarded children and a school of the building trades. In addition the newspaper included advertisements of a school for club workers and an institute of economics in neighboring provinces and the advertisements of two Penza factories for apprentices.

The five days we spent in Penza were instructive not only for what we were able to see there of provincial Russian life but even more for what we were not able to see. The systematic survey we had hoped to make did not prove feasible, largely because the relatively impotent status of Intourist provided inadequate leverage for breaking through the inertia of Soviet

bureaucracy. We knew that Penza had a number of small industries, mainly for the production of such consumer goods as bicycles, clocks, textiles and paper, and for the processing of food for local use. Our hope was to visit these, confident that the experience of our marketing economist would help to provide us with an insight into their operation and their role in the life of the community. We therefore began our stay in town with a call on the president of the Penza City Council, hoping that he would help us make the arrangements and provide us in addition with the kind of contacts that we knew an American mayor could make for visitors to his town. The president was a nervous, impatient executive who greeted us with the distant courtesy that we had come to associate by now with Soviet officials (in contrast to the open-hearted friendliness of unofficial Russians). He seemed to betray his consciousness of our origin in the outer world of capitalism and his uncertainty—for want of directives from higher authorities—about our status in the Soviet Union. The only things he was able to arrange for us to visit were the hospital, a school and one collective farm. In spite of all our vigorous efforts throughout our five days in Penza we did not succeed in visiting a single industrial establishment or in arranging an interview with a single other leader in the life of the town. Even our literary purpose in choosing Penza rather than some other provincial town came to nought; William Edgerton tried throughout our stay to get permission to visit Leskov's village of Raiskoe, which was only 25 miles distant, but his efforts failed. Perhaps it is symbolic that the name Raiskoe is derived from the Russian word for Paradise. Certainly we never reached it and for us it became Paradise Lost.

Despite the feeling of frustration it gave us, our very failure to accomplish what we had set out to do in Penza was instructive and valuable. We have no evidence that it was due to any deliberate effort to obstruct our purposes or to any ill will on the part of the Russians. We are inclined to believe rather that it was due to those very elements in the Soviet system that have already led us in our introduction to compare it to an army: centralization, authoritarianism, bureaucratic red tape and a pervasive consciousness of military security. Without proper clearance from "the center" (as Moscow is termed by the Russians), the only safe thing for Penza officials to do about the various requests we made was—as little as possible. That is the hallowed principle that has made bureaucracies act like bureaucracies ever since the invention of red tape.

V

Down on the Farm

The nature of tourist travel in the Soviet Union makes it easier to get acquainted with the life of city dwellers than with the life of peasants, who still make up some two-thirds of the Soviet population. In this respect our visit was no exception. We did spend four days on four widely scattered collective farms —two in Central Asia, one in the Penza region, and one near Minsk, in the Byelo-Russian Republic. In addition, we caught a glimpse of countless others from our low-flying airplanes. On the basis of these scattered observations we realize the need for caution in attempting to pass judgment on Soviet agriculture, but we did get an acquaintance with some of the problems of rural life in the Soviet Union, and we shall attempt to share it here.

While the Soviet farm family has some advantages over its city counterpart, we found the farmers' position generally worse than that of the workers. The Soviet economy is geared to favor the industrial worker, and the government's determination to provide him with low-cost food means that the farmer is relatively disadvantaged. Although we doubtless saw farms that were above average in quality, we can understand why unrest is said to focus in the agricultural areas of the Soviet Union. Historically it was the peasant who felt the whiplash of Communist rule most heavily when he resisted Stalin's program of collectivized large-scale farming, and while most of the bitterness of this earlier era has passed, there remains the economic pressure that stems from the inadequate return for his required service on the collective.

The farm family has the advantage of an individual house of its own, and there is not the necessity of sharing kitchen facilities with other families, which must be a vexing part of life in the city. On the other hand, the farmer must in most cases carry water from a community pump, his plumbing arrangements are primitive, and he usually lacks almost every other modern convenience. In these respects, of course, he has plenty of company among the farmers of other lands, both East and West, though his generally cold winters make his hardships severe.

Where the position of the Soviet farmer differs greatly from that of his non-Soviet counterparts is in his working arrangements. More than 99 per cent of all farming is collectivized. This pattern of life is instantly recognized by any traveler as soon as he crosses the Soviet border, because the narrow farm village with its little privately held plots of land surrounded by the large fields of the collective makes a distinctive pattern. While the individual peasant is permitted to farm his own small plot of land in his spare time, he is obliged to work on the collective throughout a regular work week whose hours vary in different parts of the country.

Under the collective farm system, the members accumulate work units in accordance with an elaborate system of job ratings, and are compensated either in kind or in cash, as they prefer. Payments in kind are made through a complicated calculation of the work-unit value of each item of produce, while the ruble value depends on the cash intake of the farm and the number of work units accumulated. All of these payroll mechanics require extensive bookkeeping and contribute to the inefficiency that seemed to us to mark Soviet agriculture as we saw it.

State Farms

Most farming is organized around the collective, but a second type of organization exists in the state farm. These are farms organized like factories and operated directly by the government, using labor on a straight wage basis. In the European parts of the Soviet Union they do not play a large role in the farm economy; but in Central Asia, where the government is attempting to make badly needed increases in grain production by placing vast new lands into cultivation, the state farm is widely developed.

As in the case of the city family, it is likely that both mother and father will hold full-time work assignments on the farm. Each will be assigned to a work brigade, responsible for a particular aspect of farm production. These brigades vary in size, but often the personnel remains relatively stationary for years on the theory that team spirit and efficient work methods are developed. This is important in view of the intense competition that is stimulated between different brigades. We found the practice of so-called socialist emulation very much in evidence on the farms we visited, with the most successful brigade as well as the most successful individuals receiving special monthly recognition in the farm office and doubtless also in bonus payments. This competitive situation may not be appreciated by

many of the peasants, especially the less able ones, and it is fortunate that transfers between brigades are possible with the approval of the farm officers. Thus, if the peasant runs into personality clashes with his colleagues or for other reasons desires a change, it can in time be arranged.

Our impression of these work brigades is one of overorganization. There is so much specialization that many workers are idle during periods when their particular assignments are not required. For example, in the milking department of the Kirov Collective Farm near Penza (where the Quaker delegation constituted the first Western visitors) we observed a herd of 40 cows being milked by seven women. Two other women worked only at carrying the milk to larger cans and filling them. Two more kept detailed records, and two men assigned to the truck crew waited until the entire operation was complete before driving off in their loaded trucks. Thus, 13 persons were engaged in a milking operation involving only 40 head of cattle. Part of this problem of good labor utilization undoubtedly stems from the large size of the farms and the difficulty of organizing an outsize work force. Soviet agricultural experts seem to favor larger and larger units along with bigger and bigger machinery. We wonder whether this is the wisest policy. Certainly the farms we saw were all big ones, ranging in size from 4,000 to 25,000 acres, and employing from 1,000 to 3,000 workers. Can 1,000 workers be organized efficiently on a 4,000-acre farm? We doubt it.

Doubtful Authority

Farm management nominally rests with the farm meeting, to which all members of the collective belong. This body, convening infrequently, passes on such matters as production plans, acreage allotments and building programs, and selects the farm officers. How much real democracy exists and how much the decisions are merely a formal ratification of previously worked-out plans and election slates, we were not able to verify, but it is doubtful whether the meeting has much real authority. There appears, however, to be a slow trend toward increased local responsibility, with the farm officers having rather more leeway in decision-making than heretofore. As concrete evidence of this on two farms we visited we found a few tractors as well as other machinery owned directly by the farm. Although the number was small, it suggests some measure of independence from the machine tractor stations which have always been in a position to dominate all farm planning by their monopoly on

mechanized equipment. With more farm machinery becoming available, the justification for the machine tractor stations, except as instruments of control, disappears, and we felt that their position was rather less dominant than a few years back. Despite this, government control over the collective farm remains strong.

We found that the size of individual peasant holdings varied in different parts of the Soviet Union. The smallest plots we saw were on the Stalin Farm near Tashkent, where the peasants were limited to about one-third of an acre. We were told here that the farm meeting had itself cut each holding to this level from a previous level of two-thirds of an acre on the grounds that it was inefficient to farm the larger plots by hand when machines could be used if the land were returned to the collective. The largest plots permitted were on the Gastello Farm near Minsk, where each peasant could have a plot of one and a half acres.

All work on these private holdings is, of course, performed in the peasant's free time outside of the regular work hours required of him on the collective lands. Children and old people also help, and the produce harvested constitutes an important supplement to the family income, either as food or as a source of cash through its sale in the city farm markets.

In addition to holding land, the individual peasant may own livestock and poultry within limits which again vary with regional conditions. On a sheep farm near Alma Ata we found the peasants permitted as many as 40 sheep, which could, in addition, be grazed on the collective lands. The same farm permitted individual ownership of three cows. On the other hand, on the Stalin Farm near Tashkent, one cow and eight sheep were the limit. As far as we could learn, no limits were set on poultry holdings except those imposed by space and facilities.

All the farms visited had reasonably good medical, educational and recreational facilities. Free clinics were in operation, as well as schools, which provided at least seven years of education. Children under 16 were not permitted on the regular work force except during the summer months, when we observed them being employed to watch livestock but not engaged in heavy work. Each farm also had child-care centers where pre-school children of working mothers were cared for during working hours. On the Stalin Farm near Tashkent, which was entirely operated by Uzbeks and was the finest farm we visited, there were nine of these day nurseries located adjacent to the brigade rest centers in the middle of the brigade work area. This arrangement made it possible for the women members of the

brigade to be near their children even while working and to be with them during the long three-hour midday break which the hot southern climate of the region made necessary. The brigade rest centers themselves, although well-filled with political portraits and production charts, were equipped with radios, chess boards and tables, and provided a midday meal. The same farm, obviously from its name the best in the region, also boasted a "house of culture" (for plays and concerts and festivals), a library, a winter tea room and an attractive "park of culture and rest." Other farms visited were rather less well-equipped with these peripheral facilities, although all had them in some measure.

Another characteristic of Soviet collective farms is the tendency to develop some processing operations on the farm itself. Sometimes these operations are for the convenience of the members of the collective, as for example, the small milling operation producing flour on the Ray of the East Farm near Alma Ata. In other cases, processing operations are on a commercial basis. We found wineries, jam plants, flour mills, cabbage-salting operations and slaughter-houses on the various farms we saw, suggesting a rather heavy involvement in processing as well as production.

There is no doubt that agricultural production is one of the major internal problems of the Soviet Union. Entirely aside from the inadequacy of distribution mechanisms, food is a crucial problem because not enough is being produced to keep pace with an increasing population. This is particularly true in relation to livestock and dairy products. Everywhere we went we found agricultural interest centering on furthering animal husbandry. The rebuilding of herds decimated by wars and the severity of Russian winters is a major goal, and accounts for the particular interest in both the acreage and quality of corn.

Soviet leaders are thoroughly aware of their agricultural crisis. One out of every three collective farm managers is being replaced by Moscow-trained experts—a project that will affect more than 30,000 farms. Comprehensive plans for the systematic increase of livestock are a part of the program of every Soviet Republic we visited, and of course the enormous new lands program in Central Asia is one of the keystones of the increased production effort. It is our opinion, however, that lessening specialization, increasing incentive and reducing the size of farms would all be steps that merit more consideration than they appear on the surface to be receiving.

VI

The Soviet Frontier

One of the most significant aspects of our 12,000-mile itinerary is the evidence it provided of a loosening of restrictions on travel within the Soviet Union. It is certainly easier to move around in Russia than it was a few years ago, and as we learned in the course of our Asian visit, it is now possible for the tourist to see some parts of the Soviet frontier. In view of the charges so frequently leveled that one is permitted to see only the more comfortable and more advanced sides of Soviet life, it is significant that we were able to include a town like Akmolinsk in our itinerary.

Akmolinsk is neither frequented by tourists nor equipped to handle them. To our knowledge, only Clifton Daniel of *The New York Times* had preceded us in visiting Akmolinsk. We did not find it a community that would appeal to anyone bent on living an easy life. The town is situated on the Ishim River some 400 miles northwest of Lake Balkhash, in the heart of the great central Asian plain. It is an important crossroads today because it is one of the centers from which the vast Soviet experiment in new lands development is being pushed.

Vast Experiment

It is characteristic of the Soviet Union to do its planning on a large-scale basis, and its attempt to resolve the problem of lagging grain production is fully in keeping with this tradition. Some 70 million acres of hitherto virgin grassland are being put into cultivation over a three-year period, largely through the creation of enormous state farms scattered over a 500-mile expanse of the flat and sparsely populated plain. It was because we wanted to see this experiment that two of us journeyed to Akmolinsk.

Until comparatively recently Akmolinsk has been accessible only by unsurfaced roads or by air. Railroad construction is, however, proceeding rapidly in Central Asia, and Akmolinsk is now served by a north-and-south rail line running between Petropavlovsk and Alma Ata and by another running 500 miles east to Barnaul and Novosibirsk. For time reasons, we ap-

proached by air from Alma Ata, making what would have been a 50-hour train trip in 4 hours.

Our plane landed at nine o'clock one morning on the typical Soviet Asian airfield that doubles as grazing land for goats and sheep. There we were transferred to an ancient and springless bus that carried us into town amid good-humored laughter from our fellow passengers, who were half choked by the clouds of dust and half shaken apart by the rutted road. There is no bridge over the Ishim River; so the driver put the bus into low gear, raced the motor, and plunged across, while cattle, water carts and human beings scattered in all directions. Later we discovered that the only two motorized taxis in Akmolinsk must perform the same feat backwards, since they are smaller Pobedas whose motors are flooded if they attempt a front-first passage.

Dusty and Barren

Akmolinsk is a sprawling community of perhaps 125,000 population in these boom days. Much of the town is of one-story log or clay construction, and the visitor's first impression after adjusting to the eternally blowing dust that lies an inch or two deep on the unpaved streets is that construction has apparently proceeded without benefit of plumb line or square. Doubtless this is a false impression gained in the older sections of town where the ravages of time and winter storms have taken their toll, but the impression is heightened by the almost total absence of trees and shrubs or even grass to camouflage the barren appearance of the residential section. More substantial buildings are of course to be found in the central parts of the town, but many of these, too, present a weatherbeaten and dusty appearance, especially at the time of our visit in the dry season, when no rain had fallen for two months and little was expected for three more.

Plumbing facilities in Akmolinsk are of the most primitive sort, and few buildings are equipped with running water. Most residents must rely on the Ishim River, and the most common vehicles are the horse-drawn water carts that provide a heavy percentage of the water used by the community. There are some wells, but during the dry season they tend to dry up. In the one major hotel in Akmolinsk, for example, the single washroom, servicing perhaps 100 guests, was equipped with six wash basins, three on either side of a partition that may have been erected so that separate facilities would be available for men and women —a nicety that has now been abandoned. Because these facilities were operative sporadically thanks to an irregular supply of

water in the well, the washroom was alternately filled to overflowing or completely deserted. When it was filled, three or four persons sometimes crowded around a single basin, one attempting to wash his face, another his feet, a third to cup his hands for a drink and a fourth to fill a water jug. Under these circumstances, washing was not a leisurely occasion.

The hotel teemed with a melange of people from all parts of the Soviet Union, and indeed from the whole Communist world. Most of the accommodations were dormitory style, but there were a number of small private rooms into which as many beds as possible were crammed. The overflow slept on the floor and on benches or chairs in the central lobby. Most of the guests appeared to be minor government officials or farmers in town for business purposes in connection with the new lands program. Certainly the hotel was not being used as a transient center for new recruits coming into the region to work on the massive new state farms. These people are quartered in dormitories better equipped to handle the numbers involved.

Labor Not Quite Forced

Akmolinsk is an overcrowded community thrust into prominence by the great project which it helps to service. We were impressed by the large numbers of young people to be seen on the streets and concluded that young people make up the bulk of the new farm labor needed in the region. As far as we could learn, these recruits are not actually dragooned into coming out into this empty prairie land, but they are certainly given every encouragement to do so. In the first place, there is a wage incentive: wages offered by the government on a three-year contractual basis are almost double those offered by state farms in the Ukraine. Second, since this is apparently not enough, considerable pressure is placed on the graduates of agricultural schools to go into the new lands region on the completion of their training. We have no grounds for suggesting that such a move is actually obligatory, but we concluded that unless a person had a pretty good reason for not doing so, he would be likely to end up in Akmolinsk or Barnaul or one of the other centers serving the new lands program. Obviously, some pressure is exerted, because the region is not an appealing one in which to invest one's life, or even a few years of it.

In retrospect, our stay in Akmolinsk emerges as one of the most interesting and illuminating experiences of our whole Soviet visit, although while it was in process we felt only frustration, annoyance and physical discomfort. It was here that

we clashed head-on with Soviet bureaucracy; it was here that we were kept under definite surveillance; it was here that we found a remnant of the old, hostile, anti-American displays and attitudes that have happily gone out of fashion in more accessible parts of the Soviet Union. As a result, we were unable to accomplish our main purpose in coming to Akmolinsk: we never got outside the town onto one of the new farms. The only view we gained of the new lands program itself was from the air on the way to and from Akmolinsk. This glimpse of vast new fields stretching as far as the eye could see across the flat emptiness of the central Asian plain was breathtaking and impressive, but it was no substitute for direct ground observation of the huge machines at work, the new farms in construction or the 1955 crop in preparation. Judged by this result alone, the Akmolinsk visit would have to be written off as a failure.

Fortunately, there were some valuable by-products. In the first place, we learned something about the plight of the individual and unknown citizen who tries to do battle with the massive Soviet bureaucracy. Bureaucracy and big government always go together, and in the Soviet Union where government is bigger than anywhere else, bureaucracy manages somehow to keep pace. As in Penza, we spent three days trying to beat down its provincial expression in Akmolinsk and retired in total defeat. Basically, the problem was that the particular official who gives permission to foreigners to move outside the city was away, and in his absence nothing could be done. Delegation of responsibility is not a part of the Soviet system. Nobody will give a permission not specifically within his sphere of responsibility. Neither will he provide a direct answer as to when the needed official will return or whether he can be reached in the interim. In our case, local agricultural officials were in constant telephone communication with their chief, but even our able Intourist guide was unable to learn where he was or whether our request was ever transmitted. For three days we went from pillar to post, and the only answer we ever got was: "The countryside is no concern of mine."

Anti-American Feeling

We also saw something of the openly suspicious climate about which Westerners have complained in the past. In sharp contrast to the relaxing atmosphere and lack of surveillance that we noted in other Soviet cities, Akmolinsk officials had apparently not yet been notified of the change in Soviet policy toward the West. Still to be seen in the town's "park of rest"

was a large anti-American poster depicting a greedy Uncle Sam riding an atomic bomb and grasping at a gold dollar as he approaches the edge of a cliff, at the foot of which lies the wreckage of the Nazi war machine. This poster was the only remaining example that we found in the Soviet Union of these once common expressions of propaganda. Much more annoying were the obvious suspicions of the functionary from the Education Ministry assigned to show us the sights. This young man accompanied us on most of the excursions around town—to a chick hatchery, to two middle schools, to the "house of culture," to the model railroad and to the "park of rest," and rarely did he let us out of his sight. On one occasion, after one of our group had gotten grease on his hands, our guide instructed the taxi driver to accompany him to the river edge, ostensibly to show him how to wash his hands, but obviously to make sure he took no pictures under cover of the bank. Pictures were not permitted of any living creature and only of especially approved buildings so conventional that their counterparts could be found in every country of the world. This excessive caution, and a cool detached manner, marked our guide as a young man anxious to succeed by hewing to the letter of every regulation. He was only trying to do his duty, but he sorely tried our patience in the process.

Limited Facilities

In spite of these difficulties, we managed to see a large part of the town and to gather some impression of the new lands program. For its size, Akmolinsk was the most poorly equipped community from a cultural standpoint that we visited. Its "house of culture" was a rather large two-story wood structure badly in need of paint both inside and out, with a fair library on the first floor and an auditorium on the second. Large posters giving statistics on 1954 farm production and announcing the 1955 goals lined the corridors on both floors. Few persons were in evidence, but our visit occurred during the work day, and we were assured that the facilities were well utilized in the evening.

Ten years of schooling is available to Akmolinsk children, and we visited two of the town's middle schools. One was undergoing extensive repairs, including the installation of a completely new heating system, although the building was only eight years old. The other was notable for its cosmopolitan atmosphere, with a North Korean principal, a Tartar associate and various racial strains evident on the playground. Equipment in both schools was limited, although there was an adequate supply of desks and chairs, blackboards in every classroom and

a reasonable quantity of maps. Laboratory equipment and demonstration apparatus for the physics and mathematics departments were, however, limited and poor in both schools. In one we were told with pride that two graduates were studying at the University of Moscow, a large painting of which formed the backdrop of the auditorium stage. This school also boasted a farm and a model railroad. Each class was required to spend two afternoons a week working its plot on the school farm, and we were particularly impressed with the work of the upper grades, who were being taught irrigation techniques and were applying them on their plots.

The model railroad is a rather common adjunct of Soviet middle schools, but we were surprised to find one in Akmolinsk. The Soviet Union is in the midst of the railroad age, and interest in railroading among school children is stimulated by providing them with opportunity to operate small model railroads. The one at Akmolinsk included two stations and two kilometers of track, with a four-car train running on a regular schedule. The older children serve as engineers, conductors, switchmen, station masters, ticket sellers and so forth, while the younger children do work under their direction and ride as passengers.

There is a functioning Orthodox church in Akmolinsk, built of wood and painted a faded blue, but we did not find it attracting large numbers of people to its evening services. This was in sharp contrast to our experience with church attendance in other parts of the Soviet Union, and it may have been due to the pressure of agricultural activity, since our visit occurred at the height of the growing season.

Sewing Machine Villain

Several movie houses were playing Russian and Uzbek films, and were being well patronized. We saw an Uzbek film that had been produced in Tashkent and were impressed with its technical quality, if not its story content. The plot related to the capture by Communist forces of the city of Bukhara in 1920, and suffered badly from the stereotyped casting that has kept most Soviet art expression in a straitjacket since the revolution. One noteworthy aspect of the picture was the presence—in a villain's role, of course—of a Western businessman who was identified only as "the representative of the Singer Company," which suggests that the impact of American merchandising was deep enough to be recognized by Central Asian audiences even after 40 years.

Our direct contact with the new lands program itself was

limited to an interview with an official in the Akmolinsk Agricultural Ministry. From this discussion and from others in Moscow, as well as from our own observation in Central Asia, we conclude that the whole vast experiment represents an enormous gamble. Rainfall is the key to success or failure, and rainfall per year averages only a marginal 12 inches. With a weather break, good crops will be produced, as they were in the first year (1954) of the experiment, but in a dry year they will fail. Eventually enough snow fences may be built and wind breaks planted to help hold moisture and top soil, but in the meantime it seemed likely to us that several years of consecutive drought might turn the whole region into a dust bowl, especially in view of the wind which seems to sweep constantly across the flat plain. The land itself is adequate, but we were advised that some fertilizer is necessary and is being widely used. No irrigation is attempted, since the engineering and supply problems are to great for present Soviet resources, although irrigation is a theoretical possibility.

It is too early to predict with any certainty the chances of success without irrigation. All that can be said is that if the project succeeds, it will make a major contribution to the solution of the Soviet farm problem. If it fails, it will be a failure of vast proportions, carrying with it the hopes and dreams, if not the lives, of great numbers of Soviet citizens. On the basis of our own inadequate visit, and bearing in mind the drought conditions which prevailed in the course of it and may have influenced our view, we are inclined to the opinion that the new lands are not the basic answer to the Soviet agricultural problem. Dramatic as is the experiment, we suggest that a more fundamental answer must be found on the farms of European Russia, an answer which will result in increased productivity on existing farms, especially in the fertile Ukraine.

VII

Soviet Education and Culture

Since Leninist doctrine in the Soviet Union is proclaimed as the one infallible key to truth, the principle function of the Soviet school system is to bring the younger generation up as staunch believers in the Marxist religion. And since the Marxist doctrine of class war has led logically to the extension of military thinking, military strategy and wartime ethical values to all areas of life, the Soviet educational system can likewise be compared to the special training programs set up within modern armies to supply whatever cadres of trained personnel the needs of the armies require.

According to Marxist-Leninist doctrine, there is no conflict between these two aims and the aim of giving every person an opportunity to develop his own abilities. Since Marxist-Leninist doctrine teaches that the individual finds real self-fulfillment only in identifying himself with his Soviet society, the use of Soviet schools as instruments for the propagation of the Marxist faith and the gearing of Soviet education to the needs of the state are considered actually to make it easier for the individual Soviet citizen to achieve self-realization.

Within this framework, reflecting as it does a system of values considerably different from those which are reflected in American education, it can be said that the Soviet educational system offers significant opportunities for a large number of young men and women to get training in proportion to their ability. It is understandable that the opportunity is greater at present in the cities than in the country. Whereas rural children form 69 per cent of the total Soviet school enrollment and outnumber city children in the first four grades by three to one, the proportion is almost reversed in the last three grades (eighth, ninth, and tenth), where city children form 59 per cent of the total enrollment.*

Soviet children start to school at the age of seven. Three types of basic schools exist side by side: the "primary school,"

* These figures and much of the other statistical data in this chapter are drawn from the excellent new study of the whole Soviet educational system by Nicholas DeWitt, *Soviet Professional Manpower* (Washington: National Science Foundation, 1955).

which comprises the first four grades; the "incomplete middle school," comprising the first seven grades; and the "middle school," comprising the full ten-year program that prepares students for entrance into the university. The teaching program is identical at corresponding levels in all three types of schools. The student who has completed a seven-year school or the seventh grade of a ten-year school can enter a "technicum," or trade high school, which allows him to complete his ten-year school program with three years of semi-professional technical training in one of a great variety of fields.

An example of the distribution of these schools might be given by citing the town of Penza, which as was noted earlier has a population of perhaps 175,000. When we asked the alert young principal of one of its middle schools how many schools there were in the town, her answer was simple: "Enough for everybody." Apparently the Soviet State Secrets law of 1947 still makes Soviet citizens reluctant to give any kind of statistics to foreigners. Fortunately, there is less reluctance in the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia,* which declares that on January 1, 1955, the town of Penza had 12 primary schools, 15 seven-year schools, 22 ten-year schools and 7 trade high schools. In addition it had 11 "schools for working youth," which operate normally in three daily shifts and provide the basic ten-year education for young people who for one reason or another have dropped out of regular schools and wish to continue studying while they work. These schools for working youth were set up near the end of World War II as an emergency measure for young people whose schooling had been interrupted, but now they appear to have become a permanent part of the Soviet educational system.

Longer Schooling Given

In the United States about 55 per cent of the children who enter the first grade complete the full 12 years of grammar and high school. In the Soviet Union the proportion of those who complete the ten-year-school program was only about 5 per cent in the past and even today is only about 12 per cent. This has resulted partly from lack of school facilities and partly from a highly selective educational policy, designed to weed out all but the most able students and direct the others into types of education or occupations more suited to their ability. Until recently the ten-year middle school served primarily to prepare the abler students for the University. A substantial revision of the ten-year curriculum, which went into effect in the fall of

1955, marks the beginning of a transition toward universal ten-year compulsory education, which is expected to be achieved by about 1960.

Except for the choice of foreign language (usually English, German or French), the curriculum in all ten grades is the same for all students. Soviet schools devote much more time than American schools to foreign languages, geography, mathematics and the natural sciences. For example, a foreign language is begun in the fifth grade and studied for six years. Most university curriculums require four more years of foreign-language study, and medical students study two years of Latin in addition. In 1953 almost 41 per cent of the class hours in the three upper grades was devoted to mathematics and the sciences, and in the fall of 1955 the proportion was increased even more. As revised at that time, the required program in all ten-year schools now includes the following subjects: Russian language and literature (including the study of some foreign works in translation, among them Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Part I of Goethe's *Faust*), a foreign language, history, geography, the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., psychology, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, chemistry, physics, astronomy, singing, drawing, manual arts and physical culture and sport (including some military training as early as the fifth grade).

Teacher Ratio High

The pupil-teacher ratio in Soviet schools has been steadily improving. In 1930 there were 36 pupils per teacher in primary and secondary schools, in 1940 there were 28, in 1950 there were 23; and the ratio since 1950 appears to have dropped even lower, owing partly to the drop in enrollment as a result of the wartime decrease in birth rate and losses in population.

Soviet university work includes a basic program lasting four to six years, depending on the field; and graduate work that comprises two advanced degrees, the *kandidat* (degree of candidate), which requires three years of graduate work and a thesis; and the doctoral degree, which is normally received considerably later than in the United States and is not considered a prerequisite for employment or advancement in a university.

In 1954 there were about 1,100,000 full-time university students in the Soviet Union—considerably less than half as many as in the United States, where there were 2,600,000. In 1953-54 there were 803 institutions of higher education in the Soviet Union, as compared to 1,851 in the United States. But in 1954 the ratio of faculty to students in Soviet universities and

institutes was approximately 1 to 12.6, while in the United States it is about 1 to 14. Although there were only 27,000 graduate students enrolled in the Soviet Union in 1952 (as compared to 69,000 master's and doctor's degrees alone awarded in the United States that year), the Soviet Union in 1954 graduated twice as many engineers as the United States and three times as many physicians. More than 60 per cent of all Soviet graduates that year were in engineering and the sciences, as compared to 25 per cent in the United States. By 1950 the Soviet Union had about 100 persons with a higher education for every 10,000 population, which is a slightly higher proportion than that of most Western European countries but is far below the United States figure of 320 per 10,000 population. The number of Soviet citizens with higher education working in the applied scientific fields, however, is believed to equal or slightly surpass the number in the United States.

Up to 1940 all Soviet education was tuition-free and a broad scholarship program provided all students except those on probation with a monthly stipend for expenses. In 1940 moderate tuition fees of 150 to 200 rubles were introduced into the three upper grades of middle school, and fees of 300 to 500 rubles in all institutions of higher education. These tuition fees still exist in higher education, but almost all students (more than 96 per cent at the University of Moscow, for example) receive scholarships, which are awarded on the basis of grades.

Science Education Advanced

From what has already been said it is no doubt clear that the Soviet educational system is impressive and deserves to be considered one of the most notable achievements of the Soviet regime. Its level of scientific and technical work in general appears to be comparable to that of the United States.* On the other hand, much less attention is devoted to the humanities and social sciences in Soviet education than in American education, and Soviet work in these areas is much more seriously affected than Soviet science by the Procrustean bed of Marxist-Leninist dogma. If Soviet scholarship is ever freed from the dead weight of Marxist scholasticism and political censorship, the subsequent achievements in the humanities and social sciences may well be

* On January 2, 1956, *The New York Times* cited an article in the *Scientific American* showing that the United States had lost five years in time and spent $200,000 unnecessarily in an effort to solve a number of problems in the area of electrical circuits which had already been solved in the Soviet Union and described in a Soviet scientific magazine in 1950.

quite as impressive as present-day achievements in the natural sciences.

In general the Soviet universities appear to be one of the most hopeful forces in Soviet society. By its very nature as an institution organized to explore the frontiers of knowledge, the university cannot be wholly regimented, for then it would cease to function as a university, and the vital sources of our expanding knowledge about man and the world would begin to dry up. The great emphasis that is placed on the natural sciences and the scientific method in Soviet education tends to cultivate in Soviet students and scholars an attitude of mind that is unlikely to prove compatible very long with any dogmatism, including the present dogmatic interpretations of Marxism. It will be interesting to see what the ultimate consequences will be of the present emphasis on science in Soviet education. One wonders what significance there may be even now in the proportions of Communist Party members in university faculties. While 34.4 per cent of all teachers in higher education in 1947 were Party members, the percentage among full professors was only 25.4 and among professors in engineering technical fields only 17.

During World War II, when Wendell Willkie visited the Soviet Union on his trip around the world, he told Stalin he was impressed by the schools and libraries he had seen. "But if you continue to educate the Russian people, Mr. Stalin," he said, "the first thing you know you'll educate yourself out of a job."*

It must be admitted that the Communist Party is a long way as yet from having educated its own dictatorship out of existence. But in the emphasis it has placed upon education—even though that education is as "partisan" and biased as the Party can make it—the Party has set in motion a force that may possibly have a significant leavening influence, in the course of time, upon the Communist dictatorship itself.

Thirst for Culture

Few things in Russia impressed us so much as the well-nigh inexhaustible thirst of the Russian people for culture. In Leningrad we saw crowds of unsophisticated-looking Russians walking wide-eyed through the galleries of the Hermitage Museum, which holds one of the richest art collections in the world. In Moscow, where the Dresden art treasures (taken out of Germany at the end of World War II) were placed on display for the three summer months before being returned to Germany,

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* Wendell Willkie, *One World* (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1943), pp. 70-71.

every day and all day long there was a line of people in front of the museum awaiting their turn to see the collection.

Some members of our group were particularly interested in the plastic arts and made an effort to determine what new trends or innovations had appeared since 1939, when the flower of Soviet realism was exhibited at the New York World's Fair. We spent some time in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, which specializes in Russian art and is arranged by years, thus facilitating our effort to study the trends. We got the impression that there was probably some greater freedom in the choice of subject matter today than in 1939. Along with the prevailing type of painting with an obvious social message there were some landscapes and some still lifes. As for techniques, there was nothing new or experimental. A very few canvasses had touches of impressionistic brush work but nothing reflecting the influence of Twentieth Century painting in the West. While considerable technical skill of a conventional kind was reflected in numerous paintings, the general result might be described as calendar art. Going back to the Nineteenth Century and before, we felt that even Soviet realism was perhaps an improvement on early Russian painting. For many decades Russian painters seemed to be concerned largely with portraiture in a static style.

The canons of Russian taste are perhaps more acceptable in sculpture than in painting. There were some effective character studies in this medium, and in some public buildings we saw monumental examples of high relief, with hundreds of sculptured figures marching out of a painted background. The absence of what we call modern architecture is one of the most striking things about the Soviet building program. New construction is almost entirely in ornate Victorian style, an indication perhaps of the cultural stage through which the Soviet people are now passing. The only "modern" building we saw was the box-like theatre in Rostov, built experimentally in the 1930's and now considered outdated by the Soviet citizenry.

Theatrical Realism

The Soviet cultivation of realism in art probably finds its best application in the theater. For perfection in creating the theatrical illusion of reality it would probably be hard to find an equal anywhere in the world to the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. On the tremendous stage of the Bolshoi, almost as deep as the auditorium itself, a river is not just a painted strip on a backdrop, but it has waves and ripples and keeps flowing throughout the scene. The total eclipse in Borodin's opera *Prince*

Igor is presented in such realistic detail that one's attention is in danger of being drawn away from the music by the stars that come out one by one when the eclipse reaches its height. In the final act of Moussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* at the Bolshoi Theater ancient wooden Moscow burns down with enough realism to make the audience start looking for the nearest exit.

The Soviet theater inherited a magnificent theatrical tradition, which had been created by such masters as Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko and was enriched in the early years of the Soviet period by the bold genius of Vsevolod Meyerhold. The experimental vigor of the 1920's was numbed, however, in the cold winds of conformity that swept through the Soviet Union in the 1930's, and the Soviet theater has remained fairly static ever since. This conservatism has been reinforced by the traditional repertory system of Russian theaters. Virtually the same selection of Russian and foreign plays is produced year after year. The strength of this system is that it offers Soviet theatergoers — particularly in the large cities — a magnificent array of the best drama of all times. During one week of our visit the theaters of Moscow alone offered five plays of Shakespeare (*Hamlet, Othello* played in two different theaters, *Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*); and plays by a dozen other foreign authors, including the Englishman John Galsworthy, the German Friedrich Schiller, the Spaniard Lope de Vega and the American Lillian Hellman. Foreign and pre-revolutionary Russian drama made up about half of that week's repertory of all the theaters in Moscow. Along with its strength, this conservative Soviet theatrical system also has the weakness of monotony. While New Yorkers are able to see some 80 new plays every year, Londoners about 100 and Parisians about 150 (few of them masterpieces, to be sure), the Moscow theatergoer rarely has a chance to see more than a dozen new plays from one year to the next.

Literary Black Market

The most interesting manifestation of the Russians' cultural interests was to be found in their bookshops. Books in the Soviet Union are relatively cheap, and the Russians are insatiable readers. Their tastes run strongly to their own classics and to the foreign works that are permitted to circulate in Russian translation. Works by Tolstoy, Turgenev, Pushkin, Gogol and a host of lesser Russian writers of the Nineteenth Century are published in enormous editions, often running into hundreds of thousands of copies. Several Russians told us that a new edition

of *Don Quixote* in Russian translation, which was issued a few months before our visit, did not appear in the bookstores at all, because the entire edition had been bought up by advance orders. We heard a few Russians grumbling about this state of affairs in terms that hinted at speculation in literature. These hints were apparently confirmed later when one member of our group happened upon a kind of ambulant literary black market in the heart of Moscow. The market was "black" not because the books that changed hands there were forbidden but because speculation in anything is forbidden in the Soviet Union. The books were simply works that were in such great demand they could not be obtained in the bookshops. Most of them were Russian translations of works by foreign authors—Dickens, Balzac, O. Henry, Dreiser, Jack London, Mark Twain and others.

Crowded Bookstores

In Moscow bookstores we often saw crowds standing three and four deep around the counters at which literary works were sold. The contrast between the literary counters and the political counters was so striking that we began deliberately checking on our impressions during our walks through the city. Not once did we see a crowd standing around the counter at which political books were sold. Several times we did not even see a clerk there. (No doubt she was helping to take care of the crowd at the literary counter!) Once when we teased a Soviet acquaintance about this implication of political indifference, he replied indignantly: "It doesn't mean a thing! That's only because there are always so many new books appearing at the literary counters. All of us have the Marxist classics at home already; so we don't have to spend a lot of time at the political counter. But you should see the crowd there when some important new political book comes out!"

We are still not convinced. To us the empty political counters in the bookshops reinforced our impression that Soviet citizens are among the most unpolitical people we have ever known. Here too, no doubt, one can see the Communists' own dialectical process at work, as if to spite them. Their overemphasis upon the forms of political activity without the political freedom that would give life to these forms has produced the very antithesis of what they wanted: political formalism and apathy, the transformation of political activity into political ritual.

What is it that has led to the great Russian interest in the classics of their own and foreign literatures? One reason, no doubt, is that the Russians have always taken literature seriously.

The George Washingtons, Thomas Jeffersons and Abraham Lincolns who struggled for justice and freedom in Nineteenth Century Russia were not statesmen but writers. This traditional interest in literature has been increased and reinforced by the phenomenal rise in literacy rates achieved by the Soviet emphasis on universal education. Another reason is that the range of reading matter available to Russians in their bookshops is far narrower than the range available in most non-Communist countries in the West. The authoritarian control of all publishing by the Soviet state gives the Russian reader no chance to be tempted by crime comics, magazines of movie gossip or sexy sensationalism. (It also gives him no chance nowadays to obtain the works of a number of distinguished Russian writers of the period just before and just after the Revolution.) If the Russian wants to read anything at all, his choice is limited virtually to political books, technical books, carefully selected classics of Russian and foreign literatures and Soviet works written in that officially recommended spirit of optimistic idealism which is called "socialist realism." The popularity of the Nineteenth-Century Russian classics requires no particularly ingenious explanation; they are simply great literature. The popularity of foreign literature, however, seems to be due not only to the Russians' robust appetite for culture but also to the fact that they have so long been cut off from most normal contacts with the rest of the world. Translations from foreign literatures are virtually their only first-hand contact with the thought of the outside world.

Reading Choice Restricted

This paternalistic control of literature by the Soviet authorities would be insufferable to most Western readers, who are accustomed to deciding for themselves what literature they consider good and what literature bad. Nevertheless, it will be interesting to see what finally comes of this state-enforced literary tutelage in the Soviet Union. Today, thanks to his narrow range of choice in reading matter, to his isolation from the outside world and perhaps also to the rather drab reality of his daily life, the average Russian—especially in the cities—reads far more and far better books than the average American or Western European. We saw taxi drivers reading Dreiser and Emile Zola, discussed Pushkin's and Lermontov's poetry with a coal miner on a Volga excursion boat, saw ordinary people in trolley-busses reading Leo Tolstoy (and others uncritically devouring Jack London!), and listened to a pretty airline stewardess tell

of her enthusiasm for O. Henry, Mark Twain, the Russian classics and a few of the better Soviet writers. Even though the foreign works in this reading material give the Russians an outdated and distorted picture of the outside world (based, for example, on such assiduously reprinted works as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), still they are steeping themselves in much of the world's greatest literature. Despite the selective process that determines what is to be published, this great treasury of literary classics that is being made available to Russian readers gives them a view of man, the world and the meaning of life that is far too rich and complex to fit easily into the confines of Marxist-Leninist doctrine. What is more, present trends in Soviet book publishing point in the direction of greater variety in the future. The most startling and encouraging news in recent Soviet literary history was the announcement we heard informally during our visit (which was confirmed in the Soviet press a few months later) that the first sizable edition of Dostoevski's works to appear in the Soviet Union since the 1920's would be published during 1956 as a part of the observance of the 75th anniversary of his death. Of scarcely less significance as a sign of the times is the announcement that the 125th anniversary of the birth of Nikolai Leskov will be commemorated with a 12-volume edition of his selected writings, which will include numerous works that have not been republished since the Soviet Revolution. Probably no other writers of their stature in all Russian literature fit so ill into the framework of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, and these two editions of their works are significant literary events.

No one who has read *The Brothers Karamazov* or *The Possessed* will fail to see the clear contradiction between publishing these works of Dostoevski and attempting to impose Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy upon the whole Soviet population. It is such contradictions as these that should make foreign observers beware of easy generalizations about Soviet reality. Who can say what fruits of the spirit may yet come forth in some distant—or not so distant—future out of just such contradictions as these?

VIII

Religion in an Anti-Religious State

When our group requested visas at the Soviet Embassy in Washington, we stated as one of our major purposes the desire to see something of religious life in the Soviet Union. It would appear that this desire was called to the particular attention of the Evangelical Christian Baptists, for their leadership welcomed us most warmly in Leningrad and Moscow, and later advised their provincial leaders of our itinerary, so that Baptist officials, usually bearing flowers, were almost a welcoming fixture at the airports where we landed. We visited not only seven individual congregations of the Baptists, but also several Orthodox churches, a theological seminary for training the Orthodox priesthood, a church of the Old Believers, who separated from the Orthodox Church 300 years ago, and two Jewish synagogues.

In addition, we had a number of extended conversations with Baptist leaders in different parts of the Soviet Union, met with Metropolitan Nikolai in Moscow and interviewed the secretary of the Council on Affairs of Religious Cults, the government agency responsible for relations with all religious groups in the Soviet Union (except the Orthodox Church). All of these contacts helped provide an impression of the status of religion in Russia today and the prospects for its future vitality.

The various Christian churches in the Soviet Union have had a dramatic history since the 1917 Revolution. In tsarist times the Russian Orthodox Church held a privileged position strikingly similar to that which is held in the Soviet Union today by the official religion of Marxism-Leninism. Only the Orthodox Church had the right to carry on missionary work among other religious groups; and a government decoration, the third grade of the Order of St. Anne, was granted to any Orthodox missionary "who is so fortunate as to make, with the aid of the police, 100 converts among the schismatics or infidels."* It was a criminal offense, punishable by prison or exile, to criticize the Orthodox Church or clergy, to convert an Orthodox follower to any other faith or to publish or distribute any literature considered to advocate dissent from the established faith.

* M. Searle Bates, *Religious Liberty: An Inquiry* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), pp. 245-46.

Despite this persecution, a number of non-conformist Christian groups had arisen in the Nineteenth Century and by 1917 could count a substantial number of converts. The Russian Baptist Union, originating in the Ukraine, and the closely related Union of Evangelical Christians that had sprung from Lord Radstock's missionary work in St. Petersburg, were two of the most important of these dissenting groups, and between them they could count more than 105,000 members in 1914.*

Orthodox Power Destroyed

The immediate impact of the Revolution was to benefit the non-conformist sects by destroying the power of the Orthodox Church. For the first time they enjoyed a legal status, and in spite of an atmosphere of increasing Communist hostility the Baptists and Evangelical Christians grew to a combined membership of at least 4,000,000 by 1928. The history of the Orthodox Church during this same period is, of course, quite different. The unfortunate intolerance, obscurantism and corruption of much of the State Church prior to the Revolution marked it as a particular target of the militantly atheistic Communists, and there began at once the long and involved struggle between the government and the now disestablished church that did not end until 1943, when an agreement was entered into which granted all religious groups in the Soviet Union a measure of freedom in purely religious matters in return for their pledge not to interfere in the spheres of activity that the state reserved to itself.

This struggle between state and church, aimed originally at the dominant Orthodox Church, in time was broadened to include all religious groups, and between 1929 and 1943 every religious faith operated under severe and hostile restrictions. It was still possible to hold services of worship, but the basic Soviet law on religion, issued in 1929, forbade activities other than worship, and struck so effectively at church organization that the number of functioning churches and congregations declined drastically during the 1930's. By 1940, for example, the number of Baptist and Evangelical Christian congregations was cut from its 1928 figure of 3,200 to less than 1,000.

All of this changed with the 1943 agreement, which is still the basic law under which all religious groups function. Under it any church is free to organize, train its clergy, seek new members and conduct its services without fear of persecution. We found

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* Serge Bolshakoff, *Russian Non-Conformity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), p. 118.

no evidence that church attenders are subject to any kind of discrimination or harassment, at least as far as rank and file Soviet citizens are concerned. Doubtless church membership and Party membership would be mutually exclusive, and probably church membership would be counted against any one seeking an important post that required Party approval. We would conclude, therefore, that discrimination against church attenders does exist, but only at relatively high levels. For the great majority an interest in religion seems to offer no serious handicap.

Training for Priests

By far the largest religious communion in the Soviet Union remains the Orthodox Church. Metropolitan Nikolai of Moscow told us there were about 50,000,000 members of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union today. (The population of the Soviet Union is about 200,000,000.) The Church now has nine seminaries in which about 2,000 young men are in training for the priesthood, and two ecclesiastical academies for more advanced theological studies. When we visited one of these centers at Zagorsk, near Moscow, we were told that about 60 monasteries and convents are now open, including 3 convents in Kiev with a total of 1,000 nuns. Some 250 young men are in training at Zagorsk for the priesthood. They are recommended for this training by local priests, and candidates are accepted by a special committee after they have submitted to a written examination. Their entire expenses are cared for by the Church itself.

During the years of more active opposition to religion, a great many churches were destroyed or seized and put to other uses. For example, in the town of Penza there were 23 churches before the Revolution; today there are 3. Moscow, with its 7,000,000 population, has only 55 Orthodox Churches and a handful of others representing other faiths. Many Orthodox Churches of historic and artistic value, however, such as the Cathedral of Saint Sophia in Kiev, the churches in the Kremlin in Moscow and the Church of Basil the Blessed on Red Square, have been turned into public museums and are preserved with great care.

Relations With State

Relations between the Orthodox Church and the government are regulated by a government-appointed Council on Orthodox Church Affairs, which was established in 1943 at the time of the agreement with the state. A similar agency, the Council on the Affairs of the Religious Cults, takes care of the relations between the state and all the other religious groups, Christian

and non-Christian. The various religious groups in some cases own their own buildings and in other cases rent them for a very modest annual payment from the government. All religious groups now support themselves entirely from the contributions of their members. Governmental regulations provide that a minimum of 20 members of any religious group may establish itself as a congregation upon registering with the local governmental authorities.

Our own very different religious background made it somewhat difficult for us to enter fully into the spirit of worship in the Orthodox Church. The interior of the building itself is usually a little overwhelming. Almost every foot of space on the walls is decorated with pictures of saints. The west wall is invariably covered with a gigantic mural representing the Last Judgment. Much of this painting is notable for its antiquity and state of preservation, whatever our reactions to its artistic style. St. Vladimir Cathedral, which we visited in Kiev, and the churches mentioned above that have become public museums are certainly among the most beautiful churches in the world.

Medieval Splendor

The Orthodox service itself takes the beholder back to the Middle Ages. Because of the relative scarcity of churches, those that are in use are almost always crowded full. There is no seating; everyone stands for a service that is usually more than two hours long. Numerous priests in resplendent and elaborate robes lead in the ritual. Some members of the congregation bow down and touch their heads to the floor, while others move about the room kissing the ikons on the wall. The sense of deep devotion of the Orthodox worshipper is profound. The miracle of the mass is for him an immediate and vivid reality. One of us was urged to buy a picture of the image of St. Nicholas the Wonder-Worker with the most evidently sincere statement that "he can do anything for you." As one tries to enter into the spirit of this service, it is a moving experience. We attended one of the largest churches in Moscow on All Saints Day. The Metropolitan was officiating, assisted by a number of clergy, including an impressive deacon with a powerful bass voice who led the 5,000 worshippers in congregational singing. Special prayers were being said for a blind woman and an expectant mother, who were admitted to the space before the iconostasis.

When the mass was ended, the Metropolitan stepped forward and made a statement about the visiting delegation (ourselves), about the peace testimony of Friends and about the

greeting the Quaker group had brought them from America. The joyful welcome rising from the congregation was as spontaneous as from any of the other religious groups we visited. It was something a little different from the hospitality to individuals, since we had not spoken and were only so many figures in Western clothes. It was more as if the Metropolitan who had just changed the host into the body of Christ had performed another miracle through the power of the Lord. Americans were said to be a warlike people from a great distance who threatened their families and their homes. Yet their church had produced before their very eyes a group of six Americans who spoke of Christian love and their hope for enduring peace. The Orthodox have a different way of seeing the miracles of faith, but an American might view the quality of that faith with some humility. These people have suffered for their beliefs and still maintain their religious practices under some difficulty.

Their faith has a strong mystical strain; its impact is one of inspiration and comfort and its focus is on the promise of Eternal Life. The Orthodox Church has never stressed a social gospel and appears to be relatively unconcerned about the impossibility of developing one under present conditions in the Soviet Union. For this reason, we felt the Orthodox Church fitted rather easily into the restricted frame within which all religious activity in Russia must be carried on. Certainly the priests at Zagorsk seemed to find nothing incongruous about the large portrait of the Patriarch in their refectory being flanked on either side by equally large portraits of Lenin and Stalin. The Church leaders have made peace with the state, and seem prepared to carry on a spiritual ministry to the soul of man while leaving all things temporal to the care of secular authorities.

Old Believers Visited

We did not have a chance to worship with the Old Believers, who split off from the state church in the Seventeenth Century; but three of us visited one of their church buildings in Kiev and were entertained at dinner in the house of the priest and his wife. Neither the church nor the robes of the priest were as ornate as those we saw in the Orthodox churches. Discussions with the priest did not disclose any important doctrinal differences. The split with the Orthodox Church took the outward form of disagreement over a reform in the liturgy, involving such details as whether to use two fingers or three in making the sign of the cross; but the real significance of the schism is

generally considered to lie in the protest it represented against the domination of the Orthodox Church by the state.

We were told that there were now approximately 20,000,000 Old Believers throughout the Soviet Union. They are in turn divided into two main branches, the priestly and the priestless. The priest we visited did not attempt to speak for the other branch, but was not aware of any major distinctions except that someone elected by the congregation officiated at the services. The Old Believers have no regularly organized training institution for priests. Instead, they have the informal practice of selecting a promising young man and allowing him to undergo a kind of apprenticeship under an older priest. The priest we visited in Kiev had one such young man training under him.

Jews in Kiev

Our first visit to a Jewish synagogue, also in Kiev, was one of the most perplexing of the religious contacts we made. Our request for an interview doubtless seemed rather abrupt. The first contact was in the early afternoon and the visit was later that same afternoon. It was obvious that this conference would present some difficulties, since we were told that the rabbi was 85 years old and very feeble, that he spoke no English and little Russian. His native language was Yiddish.

When the group arrived at the synagogue it was evident that some feverish discussion had taken place in the interval. We were greeted by the lay president of the synagogue and the entire board, or governing committee. The rabbi, a tall, white-bearded man, was at the ark and turned to greet us with solemn dignity. A number of elderly or middle-aged men were present, most of them engaged in individual religious exercises. Some were praying and bowing incessantly toward the ark. Others were reading scrolls of the Hebrew Torah.

The president of the synagogue directed us and his own group to an upstairs room for a formal interview. The rabbi sat quietly throughout. The president of the synagogue, with his board seated in a row behind him, was the only one to speak on their side. The official nature of the meeting, from their viewpoint, was emphasized by the fact that one of the men who had been reading the Torah downstairs started to enter the room and was immediately asked to leave.

Clarence Pickett explained who we were and the nature of our interest in religious groups in Russia. He referred to the American Jews who are interested in the work of the American Friends Service Committee and to the fact that the

Committee had been active in caring for Jews who escaped from Germany under the Hitler regime. The president said that if Quakers had done this it was a meritorious act but that the Jews of Kiev did not want any help from outside. He added that western Jews had not offered any help, and in fact they appeared to have forgotten the Jews of Kiev. He nearly broke down as he made this statement. After regaining his composure, he went on to tell the story of how half the Jews in Kiev had been massacred by Hitler and how the other half had escaped only because the Soviet government had sent in rescue trains to evacuate them. There were 260,000 Jews in Kiev before the war, he said, and little more than half that number now.

The president stated that the Jews of Kiev had complete freedom of religious worship and that the synagogue had been turned over completely to them by a magnanimous government. Presumably it would have been more accurate to say the government had turned it back to them, since it had been built by Jews long before. Asked whether they had a training school for rabbis, he answered that the government had recognized the need they would have for new leaders as their trained rabbis passed away, and had taken the initiative in proposing that they establish a training center for rabbis. In answer to our question whether Jews were free to go to Palestine, he said that there were no obstacles whatever. This statement did not square with our understanding of current relations between Russia and Israel.

Obviously the synagogue committee had been nonplussed by this sudden appearance of foreign Christians professing an interest in the situation of the Jews in Kiev. As we left the room after our interview, one of the Jews turned to the Russian-speaking member of our group and asked, "Did I understand you to say that you really aren't Jews at all?"

Our contact later with the chief rabbi in Moscow was reassuring. He had heard of Quakers and had a better understanding of our mission. He too, however, was categorical about the religious tolerance granted to Jews.

Baptist Contacts Numerous

The account of our numerous contacts with the Russian Baptists can well start with the story of our first meeting with them as recorded by one member of the group in his diary.

> We landed in Leningrad on an early evening plane, six American Quakers. There were the usual formalities, with unusual dispatch; a form to fill out but no examination of

luggage. In the midst of this procedure, expedited by the Russian government travel agency Intourist, a tall, bearded, distinguished-looking man approached us with what was to become a familiar, warm greeting. He was Pastor Orlov, superintending pastor of the Leningrad district of the Baptist Church. He rather hesitatingly told us that a service was just about to begin at seven o'clock at his church and asked whether we would like to attend and bring greetings. We had rather expected to have a leisurely supper at our hotel and prepare our minds and bodies for the next day's beginning of a one-month stay in the Soviet Union. But we remembered that while we had a diversity of interest our statement of the purpose of the visit had emphasized our desire for fellowship with religious groups as far as the way might open. And how could the way be more open? So after just time to deposit our bags at the Astoria Hotel, we drove off in the Intourist ZIS and ZIM cars to an inconspicuous low building built in a courtyard with dwellings all about. It will be impossible to recapture the full drama of what we found. The service began at seven o'clock. It was now eight-thirty. Every square inch of the room was packed. No notice of our coming had been given. So, although the whole audience was singing, it was not difficult to see them say to themselves as we squeezed our way in, "What's happening?" I shall never forget the effort on my part to suppress an outburst of emotion as we elbowed our way up the aisle. For I had consented to give a greeting to these waiting souls, obviously hungry for words of hope and consolation. And when the minister announced who we were, my task was made no easier. For through that whole congregation, estimated at 1,500 people, went a spontaneous audible wave of welcome, accompanied by tears of joy from literally scores of eyes. One was seeing a scene from an early Christian church when miracles happened. Here was the Book of Acts re-enacted in Leningrad in 1955.

All of us as we spoke had in our minds that we were speaking to people who had stood 900 days of German siege during the war; and that all of life represented a struggle. For "not many mighty, not many rich" were there. Mostly they were women, mature to elderly. One could imagine loss of loved ones; and isolation, loneliness and struggle to make a living, as characteristic. But here joy in the love of Christ flowed over all their grief. The church and its fellowship

were truly the center of their lives. Here again the goodness of God was felt. We had come from a country about which all too often they had heard hostile rumors, and in whose military bases encircling them America boasted that she saw her security. But no warmer or more meaningful welcome could possibly have been given.

We found this was repeated wherever we met with Baptist congregations in the Soviet Union. Sometimes, as at Penza, Tashkent and Alma Ata, the service was followed by two to four-hour talks with the Church Councils, discussing the beliefs of Friends, the status of religion in the Soviet Union and theological questions.

At the present time the Baptist Church is by far the largest Protestant denomination in the Soviet Union. This preeminence was assured by the 1944 merger of the Baptists and the Evangelical Christians into a single body that is officially titled the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists. The Union has since been expanded to include the Russian Pentecostals, and the present tendency appears to be for increasing numbers of isolated Protestant groups to affiliate with the Union. This is true, for example, of the Mennonites, who have been widely scattered from their original base in the Ukraine, and are now joining the Baptist Union in increasing numbers. The Union is governed by an All-Union Council composed of 12 members, and 50 supervisory pastors or "presbyters" represent the Council in the various parts of the Soviet Union. Some indication of the vigor in the Baptist movement can be gathered from the fact that while it numbered only 300,000 members in 1947, its present membership exceeds 500,000.

This is, of course, small as denominations go, even when attenders who are not actual members are added in to bring the total reached by the Baptist message to about 3,000,000. The church is still strongest in the Ukraine, the chief place of its origin, but there are Baptists throughout the Soviet Union in large cities and in villages, from Leningrad to Odessa, and from Moscow to Novosibirsk. In most cities where we worshipped, men and women of all ages participated and the church was a good cross section of the whole community. It includes some members of the intellectual classes, although the great majority of worshippers appeared to be workers and peasants.

The form of worship is like evangelistic Protestantism elsewhere, centering in singing, Bible reading, sermons and prayer. The choir is composed of both men and women and is often under excellent musical direction. Congregational prayer is an inter-

esting feature, one member picking up when another leaves off. The service was flexible enough so that it seemed to fit in naturally when our group was allowed to speak. The sermons always contained a clear and genuine emphasis on the fatherhood and love of God and the brotherhood of all men. Baptism is an essential symbol, but it is not a magic rite which is expected to transform the soul. Applicants are kept waiting for baptism for months until they have demonstrated that their attitude and behavior make them acceptable members.

In addition to an official pastor and a paid assistant, a Baptist church can have a number of unpaid preachers. There are often two sermons at a service. At Penza one of the sermons was preached by a man who was also a member of the choir and worked as an accountant in a machinery plant. Church government is still basically congregational, but there is a supervising pastor in each district. The All-Union Council in Moscow maintains communication throughout the movement by such means as the quarterly church magazine *Bratski Vestnik* (The Brotherly Messenger), and the tours and reports of the various district superintendents.

Possible Leaven

With the Baptists we felt a unity of the Spirit, a hand of fellowship, a testimony to the power of a loving faith. True, they have entered into an understanding with the state that neither church nor state will interfere in the domain of the other. This might well seem to concede too much. It does prevent protest to the state, or any possibility of speaking out in Christian terms on problems of politics, economics or the social order. It prevents the church from conducting church schools or even Sunday school classes, for education is the function of the state. As a result, the church runs the risk which Christians faced in the Second Century of putting a "pinch of incense before the image of the emperor." But there is great depth and vitality in the Christian experience of these devout believers, and Western Christians will do well to visit them "in the love of the Gospel" and to pray that they may find the way to truth. Though they are a relatively small group, reaching only about one and a half per cent of the population, we found them a source of inspiration, particularly in the emphasis that is repeatedly given in their preaching to Christ's love for man and man's responsibility to follow Him. Here is surely being developed a capacity for moral judgment that may well be felt in time as a leavening influence in the rigid pattern of Soviet society.

The new tolerance that has been shown toward religion by the Soviet government does not imply any change in the Communist Party's position that Marxism-Leninism and religion are completely irreconcilable. It suggests only a change of tactics away from persecution and blatant anti-religious propaganda toward persuasion. These new tactics, centered in the Soviet education system, seek to wean people from religion by convincing them that it is unnecessary and unscientific and therefore mere superstition. A recent article on "Religious Survivals and Ways of Overcoming Them" by F. N. Oleshchuk, a Soviet specialist on atheism, clarifies this present Communist policy:

> Throughout the years of revolution there has come about a new Soviet man, in the main an active, conscious builder of communism, a convinced materialist, an atheist. The number of believers in our country has sharply decreased, and the believer himself has changed. . . . Believers now participate in the construction of communism, and in their minds there is always going on a struggle of the old with the new, of religion with science. . . . A considerable number of citizens of the Soviet Union taking active part in the life of the country and honorably fulfilling their civic duty to their homeland are still under the influence of various religious conceptions. Toward these believers, says the Party Central Committee decree ["On Errors in Conducting Scientific-Atheist Propaganda Among the Public"], we must be thoughtful and considerate. It is absurd and harmful to cast political doubt on these citizens because of their religious convictions. Thoroughgoing, patient and skilfully organized scientific-atheist propaganda will help them in the long run to free themselves from their religious convictions.*

This interesting and revealing article makes admissions that bear out the impressions we got during our visit to the Soviet Union: "Religious survivals have not been completely excluded even among the intelligentsia, while some Party members and Young Communist League members are sometimes not free from them. Of late a certain revival of religious sentiments has been noticeable." The author goes on to note:

> . . . scientific-atheist propaganda becomes all the more complex because in the years of Soviet rule the clergy have tried

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* *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 6 (1954), translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, VII, No. 10 (April 20, 1955), 4.

> to modernize religion itself, adapting it to new conditions and the rising moral-political level of Soviet people. Much of religious teaching which was clearly absurd and evoked laughter and smiles has been eliminated or at least cast into oblivion. On the contrary, there is every effort to make out that religion does not contradict science and the latest discoveries of natural science, that religion is allegedly a special sphere of cognition, a cornerstone of morality.

The unregulated state of certain aspects of Soviet life also makes it difficult to overcome religious survivals, according to Oleshchuk.

> We know, for example, that many clubs or cottage reading rooms are frequently uncomfortable, dirty and cold. There is no enticement to go there, no prospect of relaxation. At the same time, churches and other houses of worship are clean and warm and offer the singing of a good choir. By organizing choir-singing circles the clergy succeed in many places in winning over young people and fettering them with the chains of religion.

Even though the Communists are as militantly atheistic as ever, this more moderate policy toward religious groups is a welcome sign.

In conclusion, we found religion laboring under many difficulties in the Soviet Union, although in a far better position than was the case prior to 1943. A real measure of freedom exists in terms of worship and evangelism and church organization, but this freedom has been obtained at the cost of compromises that must trouble the sensitive conscience. No one outside the Soviet Union, however, is in any position to pass judgment on the concessions made by any Russian church, and certainly it is not possible to visit among Christians and Jews in the Soviet Union without sensing the depth and vitality of the faith that sustains them. Speaking for ourselves, we see the Russian church as a living force, capable of great good and offering some promise of influencing the future development of Soviet society. In any event, we found it in anything but the moribund state in which most Westerners assume it to be.

IX

The Man They Left Behind

William Edgerton's Account of His Second Month in Russia

As soon as we received 30-day visas from the Soviet government for our Quaker visit, I wrote a letter to the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (generally known by its Russian abbreviation as VOKS). I expressed a desire to stay in the Soviet Union for a second month and do research in Soviet libraries and archives on the Nineteenth-Century Russian writer Nikolai Leskov, about whom I was preparing a book. I enclosed a detailed list of published materials I had been unable to obtain in the United States or Western Europe and of unpublished Leskov documents that I knew to exist in Soviet archives. I also listed the names of a number of Russian literary scholars who are well known for their research on Leskov and whom I hoped to meet. I requested the help of VOKS in making arrangements to meet these scholars and to use the materials I listed.

Literary Contacts

Soon after we arrived in Moscow I had a very cordial interview with representatives of VOKS, and they immediately set to work making the contacts for me that I had requested. Within the next few days I met several Russian literary scholars, had an interview with the Assistant Director of the Lenin Library, obtained a reader's card for that library and accepted an invitation from VOKS to give a talk later on at the Gorki Institute of World Literature before a group of literary scholars and teachers. Meanwhile, Intourist officials gave us informal assurances that there would be no difficulty in having my visa extended for a second month to take care of the research I wanted to do.

Near the end of our 30-day tour I submitted my passport to the Soviet authorities through Intourist for the visa extension. On the afternoon of that same day I was informed that my request had been denied. Greatly disturbed, I immediately appealed to VOKS, pointing out that unless I obtained a visa extension I could not even give the talk they had requested on Russian studies in the United States. The VOKS representa-

tives seemed likewise disturbed and promised to help in any way they could. Even their efforts proved fruitless, however; and 48 hours before the rest of the Quaker group were scheduled to leave the Soviet Union I found myself facing the collapse of all my plans for literary research in Soviet libraries and archives. There was no one left to appeal to except the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself. By a fortunate coincidence an interview had already been scheduled for us with Andrei Gromyko. The next day, during Mr. Gromyko's very cordial interview with Clarence Pickett, Stephen Cary and me, we brought up the subject of my proposed research on Leskov and the difficulty I had experienced in trying to get my visa extended. After listening sympathetically to my account of the research I had already done on the writer, Mr. Gromyko spoke of Leskov's profound knowledge of the Russian people and mentioned in particular his famous comic story "The Tale of the Cross-Eyed, Left-Handed Smith from Tula and the Steel Flea." We exchanged comments on Leskov's humorous use of language in the story, and Mr. Gromyko agreed to look into the matter of a visa extension for me.

Gromyko Works Fast

When we left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs I went straight to the Polish Embassy to get a transit visa permitting me to fly across Poland with the rest of the Quaker group when they left Russia the next morning. But I had not yet finished filling out the application blank when the telephone rang and the Polish official who answered it told me there was no need to complete the visa applications: my Soviet visa had just been extended for another month within half an hour after we had left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

With this visa extension from on high, my status changed almost overnight; and as I made one request after another during my second month—to use libraries, to see unpublished documents, to visit scholars—the way was almost miraculously open. On receiving a reader's card from the famous Lenin Library in Moscow I was assigned to the Scholarly Reading Room No. 1, which I heard Russians refer to as the "professors reading room." Sitting in this quiet place, with its walls lined with the works of Lenin and Stalin, the pre-revolutionary Brockhaus-Efron Russian encyclopedia, the first and second editions of the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia,* the *Literary Encyclopedia,* the mimeographed bi-monthly list of new foreign accessions to the Lenin Library and various other reference works, I submitted

call slips for all the published material by or about Leskov that I had been unable to find in the Slavic collections of the United States and Western Europe. Except for the year 1893 of one Russian newspaper every one of the rare items I requested turned out to be in the Lenin Library. (As has been noted already, the complete catalogs of Soviet libraries are accessible only by special permission, while the public catalogs are limited as I was told officially to "recommended" books. The public catalog of the Lenin Library was so limited that it was useless for my purposes; but here, as in all the other Soviet libraries I used, I invariably found the librarian most helpful, cordial and efficient.)

Within a few days I had completed my work with published materials and was busy studying the precious unpublished Leskov manuscripts and letters that are preserved in the Lenin Library, the State Literary Museum, the Central State Literary Archives and the archives of the Academy of Sciences. Before the end of the month I went to Leningrad for work in the archives of Pushkin House and the great Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library. Personal contacts with Russian literary scholars rapidly multiplied, and the unvarying cordiality I found in them all impressed me as evidence, not that their friendliness was a product of the new Geneva atmosphere, but rather that the Geneva atmosphere had made them feel free to express their real desire for normal contacts with scholars of other countries.

Speech to Scholars

The interest shown in my talk on Russian studies in the United States was a further indication of this attitude. The talk was arranged as an invitation affair, but as advance word about it got around among Russian literary scholars in Moscow I was told that VOKS began receiving more and more inquiries and requests for invitations. When the time for the talk arrived, I found that the room in which it was to be given at the Institute of World Literature was literally packed to the doors. I spoke for an hour in Russian from rather full notes. After beginning with a general description of American education, in which I called attention to the fact that it is a decentralized system in which both public and private institutions cooperate and compete, I went on to point out that Russian studies in the United States, though flourishing vigorously, are still relatively new; and that the study of French, German and Spanish in American schools and colleges still greatly exceeds the study of Russian. With this said by way of providing perspective I went on to describe the phenomenal growth of Russian studies in American

universities since World War II. My hour-long talk was followed by a lively question period that continued for another three-quarters of an hour.

Pravda, the leading newspaper in the Soviet Union, carried next morning a brief account of my talk. This two-inch item in *Pravda* served throughout the rest of my visit as a kind of general introduction to everybody in the Soviet Union, and provided striking evidence of the thoroughness with which Soviet citizens read the four-page daily newspaper that they know to be the most authoritative mouthpiece of the Party that rules the country. More than once after that, in conversation with total strangers I met casually on the street or in a train, my identification of myself as an American professor of Russian literature would bring the response: "Oh yes, you're working on Leskov, aren't you?" One good-natured Russian scholar who went to a great deal of trouble to help me in my search for a particularly elusive bit of information about Leskov called me up one evening shortly after my lecture to pass on the latest clue he had found. After giving me the name and address of the scholarly institution where he thought I might be able to find the information I was seeking, he added: "And take that *Pravda* article along with you—it'll be a help!"

The two inches in *Pravda* soon led to requests for interviews in the Soviet newspaper *Literary Gazette* and the weekly news magazine *New Times.* Knowing the great differences between the monopoly press of the Soviet Union and the decentralized, privately controlled newspapers with which I was familiar in the United States, I must confess that my first impulse was one of hesitation. After some reflection about the reasons the Quaker group had undertaken to visit the Soviet Union in the first place, however, I concluded that the invitation to speak to the Russian people through their own press offered an opportunity and a challenge. It was an opportunity to share my concern for genuine peace and justice with thousands of Soviet citizens instead of the small handful with whom I had talked in person, and it was a challenge to try to observe the same standards of frankness as well as good-will in addressing the people of the Soviet Union that I wanted to observe at home in reporting on our trip to the people of the United States.

Newspaper Article Asked

The *Literary Gazette* had asked me to make a statement about my attitude toward the Geneva Conference, which was then about to begin. I wrote the following article, under the

heading "For Confidence and Mutual Understanding," which was published in the *Literary Gazette* for July 23, along with statements by three other foreigners then in Moscow:

> I am certain that my deep desire for the success of the Geneva Conference is shared by Americans in general all over our country, from my colleagues in scholarly life to the farmers and textile workers of my native state of North Carolina, and from the steel workers, coal miners and businessmen of Pennsylvania, the state in which I now live, to the capitalists of Wall Street (some of whom, as I personally know, have long worked actively for better mutual understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union).
>
> The discovery of the secret of atomic energy marks a turning-point in world history. The possible effects of this discovery for good or evil are so great that I believe it obliges us to re-examine all our most firmly held convictions. Beside the great, awe-inspiring fact of man's control of atomic energy I believe everything else becomes secondary —the theories of capitalism in which our American businessmen believe and the theories of the class struggle and revolution that form an important part of Marxism-Leninism. The most vital problem confronting mankind today is the problem of discovering non-violent ways to resolve all human conflicts. As President Eisenhower has expressed it, "There is no alternative to peace."
>
> I believe we must not allow ourselves to expect miracles from this short conference at Geneva. The differences between the Soviet Union and the United States in history and cultural heritage, in philosophy of government and in political and economic structure, are so great that it would be difficult for us to understand each other even if these past ten years of mutual distrust had never existed. What I hope for, however, is that the Geneva Conference will succeed in creating an atmosphere that will enable us, with growing confidence in each other, to work together on the task of finding just and peaceful solutions for the problems that divide us.
>
> Even though I speak your language and have spent many years in studying Russian literature and culture, there are many things that still puzzle me about your country. It is only natural that those of my fellow Americans who are not specialists in Russian affairs should be even

more puzzled. But the unfailing personal kindness and friendliness shown to me here by Soviet citizens, even by those whose understanding of my country seemed distorted, gives me confidence that we can overcome the barriers of misunderstanding that separate us if only we have more opportunities to know each other as individual human beings.

I hope the Geneva Conference will prepare the way for a far greater cultural interchange between the peoples of our two countries. I hope that the present exchange of agricultural delegations will be followed by the exchange of many more delegations of all kinds. I hope that many of my colleagues in Russian studies will have the sort of opportunity I am now enjoying to do research in your libraries and archives and to get acquainted with your scholars. I likewise hope that your specialists in American studies will have similar opportunities to get acquainted with their American colleagues and work in our American libraries and archives.

Last month when I saw your magnificent productions of *Boris Godunov* and *Prince Igor* at the Bolshoi Theater I found myself hoping that the day would soon come when our cultural exchanges could include a visit of your Bolshoi opera and ballet companies to the United States. I likewise found myself thinking of the American works that I should like the Soviet people to have an opportunity to see, such as George Gershwin's great opera on American Negro life *Porgy and Bess,* which recently made a very successful tour through Western Europe. I remember my pleasure at seeing your movie of Gogol's *Revisor* last year in New York. I have been glad to see that our American Walt Disney's famous film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs** (which he made in both and English and a French-language version) is being widely shown in the Soviet Union, and I think it would be a great contribution to mutual understanding if the Soviet people could see some of his other major films, especially his new and truly exciting documentary nature films. Other films likewise come to my mind, such as Judy Holliday's socially significant comedy *Born Yesterday* and Marlon Brando's great new film *On the Waterfront.*

* The French-language version of this film, without Walt Disney's name and with the identification "A Foreign Film," was being widely shown in the Soviet Union while we were there. The Soviet citizens with whom we talked were not aware that it was an American film.

There is no end to the possibilities for better understanding between the peoples of the world through such cultural exchanges as these that can be opened up by a successful conference at Geneva. But even if the Geneva Conference should fail completely (which I strongly doubt), the task of men of good-will all over the world would remain unchanged. We should simply have to redouble our efforts in all areas, including that of cultural interchange, to create the atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding that will eventually make it possible to solve our problems.

The *Literary Gazette* published this statement in a full and faithful Russian translation. The only place in the entire article where the translator apparently winced a little was in my reference to personal knowledge of peace-loving Wall Street capitalists. The word "capitalists" appeared in the Russian translation as *biznesmeny*—our English word "businessmen" dressed up in Russian spelling!

Magazine Statement Printed

The editors of the Soviet newsmagazine *New Times,* which is published in ten languages, requested an interview about the development of cultural ties between the Soviet Union and the United States. Here, too, I wrote out my statement in advance, and I asked the editors to let me check their Russian translation of it before the various editions of *New Times* went to press. They readily agreed, and a few days later a friendly young staff representative called at my hotel room with the Russian text. We compared it sentence by sentence with the original, and it proved on the whole to be a very competent, faithful translation. Then the young man told me that the editors were worried about the undue length of the statement and requested my permission to shorten it by omitting one passage where they felt the continuity would not be harmed. When he showed me the passage, I told him I would be very sorry to omit the idea it expressed. He told me that he too liked it personally, and even thought it was rather poetic; but he pointed out that *New Times* was a mass publication and that simple people, such as Siberian peasants, might not understand my point. We discussed the matter long and vigorously, but at last I reluctantly agreed, for the sake of the Siberian peasants, to let him cut the passage out. The article was duly published in No. 31 of *New Times,* and when I arrived home in the United States I found copies of that issue in half a dozen languages awaiting me. When I compared

the published version with my own text, however, I was greatly disturbed to discover that an additional omission had been made. Since both omissions happened to occur in the same paragraph, which I considered to be the most important part of the article, I shall quote that paragraph here with both of the omitted passages enclosed in brackets. The first one, marked with one asterisk, is the passage omitted without my previous knowledge or consent; the second is the one that I reluctantly agreed to let the editors leave out.

> I personally believe that we scholars, as well as journalists, writers and everyone else who deals with the communications of ideas, have a special responsibility in this matter of working for better relations between our two countries. I believe our highest duty is to find and communicate the truth as honestly as we can. [I do not believe there is such a thing as Marxist truth or capitalist truth, American truth or Russian truth; I believe there is only *truth,* and none of us has yet grasped it entirely.]* If a Marxist scholar finds some aspect of truth that I as a non-Marxist and a Christian have failed to find, I will honor him and feel indebted to him for it; and I trust that his attitude toward the work of us non-Marxists will be the same. [I remember the words of the Seventeenth-Century English poet to his beloved as he left for the war: "I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honor more." With a slight variation in these lines I believe we can apply them to scholars, journalists and writers in general: "We could not love our country so much if we did not love truth even more than our country." To me that represents the highest form of patriotism.] If all of us take that attitude toward our search for truth, then we can feel confident that our work is helping to draw our various nations closer together and is helping to lay the foundation for a true and lasting peace.

After discovering the new omission in the paragraph above, I wrote to the editor-in-chief of *New Times* and called it to his attention. Explaining that I realized such omissions could occur accidentally, I told him that I was spending a great deal of time lecturing all over the United States about my visit to the Soviet Union, and I had found it quite impossible to persuade my audiences that the omission was accidental—nor could I myself feel sure it was accidental—unless he found it possible to publish a correction.

In reply I received the following telegram from Moscow:

RECEIVED YOUR LETTER STOP YOUR REQUEST WILL BE FULFILLED IN NEXT ISSUE NEW TIMES COMMA COPY OF WHICH YOU WILL RECEIVE.

LEONTYEV NEW TIMES

Shortly afterward I received copies by air mail of the English and Russian versions of *New Times* for November 10, 1955 (No. 46). Prominently displayed in the table of contents was the heading, "Editorial Letter Box: Note on the Interview With Professor Edgerton." On page 31 appeared the following announcement:

> In its issue of July 28, 1955 (No. 31) *New Times* carried an interview with Professor William B. Edgerton of Pennsylvania State University, then on a visit to the Soviet Union. On November 2, we received a letter from him saying that on his return to America he discovered an omission in the interview "which greatly disturbs" him. Reference is to several sentences which were deleted in the process of reducing the interview to normal length.
>
> Professor Edgerton evidently attaches much importance to the omitted sentences, and we therefore readily comply with his request to publish them. These are the sentences in question:

Then followed a full quotation not only of my crucial sentence about the universal nature of truth—but also of the poetic passage that was too hard for the Siberian peasants!

Poland Revisited

By the end of these two eventful months in the Soviet Union I felt a need to gain a better perspective on my Russian experiences by visiting strongly contrasting areas of Europe.

After some effort I succeeded in getting a five-day visa for Poland, where I had worked for five months in 1946 as a member of the Anglo-American Quaker Relief Mission; and I spent the five days revisiting Warsaw and Cracow. I was impressed on arriving in Warsaw from the East, just as I had been impressed in 1946 upon arriving there from the West, by the remarkable Westernness of Poland's whole culture and outlook, despite her geographical position in Eastern Europe. Five days is of course far too short a time to penetrate very far below the surface of life in any country, even though one speaks its language; and

yet there are certain things that stand out rather clearly in my mind as I look back now upon the experiences that were packed into those five days in Poland. One is that the Poles have not lost their spirit of independence, despite the fact that I found less individual freedom in Poland last summer than I had found in 1946. Another is that the Poles are now overworked, very tired and very poor. To be sure, that could also have been said in 1946. The difference is that now it is ten years later, and in 1946 the future appeared less certain and therefore more hopeful.

It is too soon as yet to foresee what consequences the destruction of the Stalin cult may hold for Poland and the other countries of Eastern Europe. If it means greater national independence, greater personal liberty, greater freedom of religion and conscience and greater protection for the individual against arbitrary actions by those in positions of power, then I feel confident that the Poles will welcome this change.

Spain Persecutes Protestants

After my stay in Poland I journeyed across Germany and France to the frontier of Franco's Spain, traveled by train to Madrid and spent two days in the Spanish capital before taking a trans-Atlantic plane back to the United States. My special purpose in visiting the country that is ruled by Franco and his Falange was to compare the situation of the Protestants in Spain with the situation of all Christians in Russia. I visited two Protestant churches (neither of which was allowed to carry any outward sign to indicate that it was a place of worship), and I talked with a number of Spanish Protestants. When I explained to one of them that I had just spent two months in the Soviet Union and had come to Spain to make comparisons, he said, "I doubt whether you could find any other country in Europe that is so similar."

Since our Quaker group had had many contacts with Baptists in the Soviet Union, I was naturally interested in learning about the Baptists in Spain. I found out that one of the two Baptist churches in Madrid had been closed for more than two years and the Baptists were still unable to get permission from the government authorities to reopen it. I also found out that the Spanish government had refused to permit the president and secretary of the Spanish Baptist Union to leave the country in order to attend the world Baptist conference that had been held in July in London. (The Baptists of the Soviet Union were represented there by a delegation of nine—the first such delegation since 1928.) I learned that Protestants are in effect excluded

from Spanish universities, that they are unable legally to issue publications of their own or receive Protestant publications from abroad, that their children are obliged to study the Catholic catechism in public schools, that they often have great difficulty in obtaining legal recognition for Protestant marriages, that they suffer innumerable forms of legal discrimination and that they cannot count on the protection of the state authorities against physical harm or the destruction of their property by fanatical neighbors.

There are important differences between the situation of the Protestants in Spain and the situation of all Christians in Russia, and yet in one respect the two situations are strikingly similar. The persecution of both groups is carried on in the name of Truth, of which each group of persecutors is convinced that it has a monopoly. While in Soviet Russia the persecution—now fortunately in abeyance, it seems—has been carried on by a political party that is openly hostile to all religion, in Franco's Spain the task of persecuting Christians is organized and carried out by other Christians.

X

Seeds of Understanding

In conclusion, we would remind the reader that this is not a full-fledged report on life in Soviet Russia. It is an attempt to indicate what six Americans saw and felt during a brief visit. True, at some points this has been supplemented by a framework of factual data secured from authentic sources but not observed. We have not ventured much by way of political discussion partly because we are not competent and partly because these observations are much more amply provided for from other sources.

We went to Russia partly to see how real the iron curtain is. Our airplane flew easily through it—no delay at customs, no questioning of our intentions, only minor restraint on taking pictures. And yet we know the curtain is there. Ideas do not pass through it easily. Trade is not free. Misinformation about Americans by the Russian press is all too often countered by evidence of ignorance concerning facts about Russia in the American press. And in the field of politics, wide areas of suspicion of motives still prevail.

If, instead of rivalry and suspicion, we are to look forward with hope that our two great powers can learn to work toward the common welfare of the world, there is an enormous job of understanding to be done on both sides. And if, as most Americans assume, we are now the stronger, it lays upon us the responsibility to be the venturesome aggressors in promoting understanding. That will require not only great skill on the part of our government, but very greatly increased effort on the part of voluntary forces. These efforts by small groups who go with no other purpose but to understand and be understood *can* now be carried out, and we hope they will be on a much accelerated scale.

Formidable Barriers

This is not to suggest that mutual understanding will be easy to achieve. The reality of ideological conflict, power rivalry and vastly different cultural heritage present formidable barriers that have been heightened by ignorance on both sides and the increasing isolation of the Soviet people until recently from contacts with the outside world. The tension of the last ten years

has added still another difficulty by surrounding the problem with a belligerent atmosphere that discourages a rational approach to its solution. Emotionalism needs to be replaced by reason if any useful appraisal is to be made of the forces operating in Soviet society.

We found ample evidence that Russia retains much of the monolithic character which has marked it for centuries and which the Communists have refined and reinforced since 1918. Individual freedom as we know it in the democratic world does not today exist in Russia, and never has. The Party is in full control of the machinery of government, the national economy and the social order. We have no reason to believe it has altered its revolutionary objectives, or abandoned its war psychology or its intolerance of dissent. Our visit dispelled none of these popular impressions of Soviet society, but it reinforced our conviction that they convey only a partial and very inadequate understanding of the Soviet Union. Taken alone, they suggest a static situation: total control, rigid doctrine, inexorable violence. Yet almost our strongest impression of Soviet society was its fluid quality. The internal situation in Russia is anything but static; forces are at work that will certainly make the future very different from the past. To assume the contrary is to dehumanize the Russians and reduce the operation of society to a mechanical formula. This is a Marxist doctrine, and one which runs counter to both Christian belief and historical evidence. It fails to take into account the fact that dictators are men and that they govern other men—in this case, 200 million of them. These relationships are much too complex to be dealt with on any neat mechanical basis.

Marxism vs. Education

Soviet society is itself a demonstration of the inadequacy of the Marxist formula. A whole nation has been taught to read. An increasing number are being taught to think, and according to American scientists, to think very well. This massive educational program has been necessary to carry forward the national program of industrialization and to indoctrinate the people with Marxism. But education, once provided, is not subject to easy control. How long will men well trained in the scientific process accept without question Party pronouncements based only on "holy" dogma? How long will millions of Russians read Tolstoy and Turgenev and Dostoevski and Shakespeare and Dickens and Zola before some of the ideas of these literary statesmen produce serious cracks in the monolithic structure of Soviet society? It

seems to us that mass education will present increasing problems to Russian leadership. It is already a new and dynamic force that must be reckoned with.

Another force that refuses to fit neatly into the Marxist doctrine of scientific human relations is religion. We found enough evidence of spiritual vigor to suggest that the Communist concern over a religious revival is well founded. The church and synagogue and mosque labor under difficulties, but neither persecution nor persuasion has yet succeeded in removing them from the Soviet scene, and in our opinion, they are gaining rather than losing strength. We have no illusion about the extent of their current influence on Soviet policy, but we believe their emphasis on moral values and standards of conduct is adding a crucial dimension to Russian life.

The rise of a new privileged class and a highly stratified society present another force to challenge revolutionary Marxism. Communists are subject to exactly the same temptations as capitalists when they obtain positions of wealth and luxury. The successful Russian has a stake in stability, and his country home, his car and his television set may influence his thinking about domestic and international affairs more sharply than does his theoretical Marxist ideology.

The visitor finds ample evidence that this stratification has already progressed very far, at least in the European parts of the Soviet Union, and the inviting displays of consumer goods to be seen in every urban department store suggest that these materialistic temptations and pressures will become greater rather than smaller in the years ahead. Once the basic capital structure is built, the possibility that it may be used to meet internal consumer needs cannot be overlooked. Certainly the leadership will be tempted in this direction, and will face increasing pressure from the people if they fail to respond. We believe that the possibility of stable, conservative forces having an increasingly important role in Soviet life is being underestimated by the West.

Controls Relaxing

Finally, we noted some relaxation in internal controls. The police have been downgraded. The leaders appear in public without the kind of maximum security arrangements that have always surrounded them in the past. The principle of collective leadership as contrasted with one-man rule is becoming more firmly established. Some economic decentralization is occurring in both agriculture and industry in response to pressures pro-

duced by the inefficiency of a ponderous bureaucracy. Tourist restrictions are being eased and the exchange of cultural, scientific and economic delegations encouraged. None of these developments has progressed far and the government retains the power to reverse them if it decides to do so, but the farther they go, the more difficult it is to return to earlier patterns. In any event, we are confident that the West should seize every opportunity to encourage decentralization and relaxation and to exploit every chance for increased contact. The Soviet Union faces grave internal problems in terms of inadequate agricultural production and serious steel shortages. The time required for their solution offers not only the prospect of some diversion of Soviet attention from the international scene, but provides an opportunity for the West and particularly the United States to encourage solutions that will facilitate rather than impede these current trends toward relaxation.

We believe, therefore, that Americans now have a new and significant opportunity to develop better understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union. Too often all that is offered us is an armed truce in a cold war. This may well be the best governments can offer if citizens content themselves with fostering suspicion and fear. And if disaster should come from such attitudes, the blame cannot be centered on governments alone, because even a little venture now opens up vistas for action by private citizens, especially in America, which are thus far largely unexplored.

There is an important injunction to "feed our enemies if they are hungry." Sometimes to sit with those who are styled enemies and eat their bread with them also develops a new attitude on both sides. If, in practical ways, we in America, and especially those of us who call ourselves followers of Christ, are to "love our enemies," the way is open for greatly increased experimentation.

Eleanor Zelliot links arms with Leningrad school girls. Behind composite picture rises the University of Moscow, which has 12,000 students.

William B. Edgerton accepts strawberries from Baptist layman near Kiev. Group was cordially received, had many chances for informal conversations.

They called it "a mission of good-will, a religious venture," but they added, "We were conscious of our obligation to make the journey not only with open minds and open hearts but also with open eyes. In our contacts with Soviet citizens during our visit and in our reports to our fellow citizens after our return home, we were determined to try to maintain a single standard of honesty and good-will."

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